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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, 1985-1992

BY

CORA JANE VOYAGEUR ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND REASEARCH
IN PARTIAL PULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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IN
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled **An Analysis of the Transition Year Program at the University of Alberta, 1985 - 1992** submitted by CORA JANE VOYAGEUR in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in Educational Foundations.

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Date April 19, 1993

DEDICATION

To my husband Brian
and my children Carly and Drew

ABSTRACT

Widespread participation in post-secondary education by Canadian Indians is a relatively recent phenomenon. This increased participation is due, in part, to innovative programs undertaken by various post-secondary institutions across Canada. In 1984, the University of Alberta took steps to increase its Aboriginal enrollment by implementing the Transition Year Program (TYP). The program allows Native students who do not meet the regular admission requirements to gain entry to university. This 1 year program provides Native students with support services to ease them into the foreign, often intimidating, academic world. Since its inception, the TYP has actively recruited and supported an estimated 165 Native students on campus. This study assesses the role of TYP in increasing Native enrollment at the University of Alberta.

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To my husband, Brian Calliou, for his love and support.

To my children, Carly and Drew for whom I strive to build a better world.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a steady and substantial increase in Native[1] enrollment at post secondary institutions across Canada. The Department of Indian Affairs states that the number of Status Indian and Inuit students receiving financial assistance for post-secondary education has increased from 1,060 in 1970[2] to 21,490 in 1991.[3]

The University of Alberta has also experienced a marked increase in its Native student enrollment. In twenty years, the Native student population has increased from 5 in 1971, to an estimated 300 in 1991 (University of Alberta, 1992a:3).

It appears that Aboriginals have embraced the merits of education. Post-secondary education is viewed by Natives as a means of achieving economic and political self-sufficiency. An Elder at the Alexis Band in Alberta states, "Indian people must develop legal, social, and economic equality with other Canadians" (National Indian Brotherhood, 1988:12).

Acknowledging the merits of "western" education has been difficult for Aboriginals. In the past, they endured many hardships and degradations in the name of education. For example, they were placed in residential schools and industrial schools which separated them from their home communities and their families for long periods of time.

---

[1] Throughout this paper the terms "Native" and "Aboriginal" will be used interchangeably. These terms include Status, Non-status, Metis and Inuit unless stated otherwise.

[2] This figure was obtained from an Department of Indian Affairs document, "Changes Proposed to Post-Secondary Student Assistance Program" (Government of Canada,1988:4)

[3] This figure was obtained during an interview with Al Rollins, Head Education Analyst, Post Secondary Education/Provincial Tuition, Resource Allocation, Funding Services, Department of Indian Affairs. Edmonton, March 16, 1993. These figures do not include Non-status or Metis students who are included in the University statistics.

Natives have had to overcome many obstacles to arrive at their present educational and psychological state. Some of the obstacles were legislative in nature. The British North America Act, 1867 assigned the Federal Government the responsibility for "Indians and land assigned for the Indians" (Daniels, 1973:25). Education was one of the services the Government was to provide for the Indians.

Prior to the British North America Act, 1867, legislation was passed in 1857 which set in law that Indians were to receive a "White Man's" education. E. R. Daniels describes the Act this way:

> It was with the passage of this Act that it was spelled out, for the first time, where education, in the white man's eyes, would lead the Indian. The aim had been stated in general terms on many occasions -- education would prepare the "savage" for conversion for living a Christian way of life, and for a fuller citizenship; no longer would he need to be categorized as one of his Majesty's "Red Children" or a "ward of the government". But in 1857 it became official (Daniels, 1973:89).

The age of children required to attend school was changed a number of times but in the end it was settled that Indian children had to attend school from the age of 6 years to 16 years (Hawley, 1986:78).

Early governmental attempts to educate Indians were haphazard. Prior to 1890, when the Federal government developed an education portfolio, there were no guidelines for Indian education. Even after developing the portfolio, the government had neither the expertise nor the professional staff to provide educational instruction (Chalmers, 1970:159). As a result, religious orders were contracted to provide instruction to the Indians. The educational value of the instruction was minimal since the emphasis was on christianizing and not on educating. E. R. Daniels describes the situation as follows:

> Allied with this Holy Zeal was always some type of other basic elementary instruction, so that perhaps it could be said that Indian education was traditionally based upon the four Rs - reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion. There had been a tendency to think of Indian students in terms of being provided with only these basics of education - elementary and (rural) vocational - until the 1950s. (Daniels, 1973:77)

Indian students were not to receive the fundamental education they needed to pursue a post secondary education. Instead, they were given vocational training to enable them to become farmers and housekeepers. Indian students were not taught academic courses but courses in sewing, cooking and animal husbandry. Essentially, they were taught to be the servant and not to be the master.

The quality of education provided to Indian children was questionable since teachers on Indian reserves were not required to have formal training until the middle of the twentieth century. As late as the 1960s, few teachers on Alberta Indian reserves had valid teaching certificates (Chalmers, 1970:173).

Although the Federal government, through its Department of Indian Affairs[4], made provisions for accessibility to education, there was little incentive to obtain a higher degree of education than what was offered on the reserve.

If an Indian were to become "civilized"[5] he lost his Indian status (Reiter, 1991:41). As an enfranchised Indian, he was no longer entitled to benefits; few as they may be. For example, he would be unable to live on the reserve with his family or hunt and fish without a permit. Of this policy E.R. Daniels states:

> It also seemed to imply that there obviously were some Indian people operating at these educational and professional levels, and it was intended that they should not have the benefits of living in both worlds (Daniels, 1973:93).

Educational reform came with the changes to the 1951 Indian Act. The closure of residential schools, the emergence of integrated schools, the teaching of provincial curriculum, and the decrease in the number of federally run Reserve schools[6] all contributed to an increase in the quality of education received by Indian students (Indian Association of Alberta, 1970:80).

Additionally, there was a change in the type of instruction delivered. Previously, Aboriginal students had been enrolled in vocational, non-academic high school courses. Describing this practice in a submission to the University of Alberta Senate Task

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[4] The Department of Indian Affairs evolved from the Department of the Interior.

[5] A "civilized" Indian was one who joined the Army, the Clergy or obtained a University Degree.

[6] There are presently 4 federally operated reserve schools in Alberta. They are located on the Cold Lake, Goodfish Lake, Paul, and Sunchild/O'Chiese Reserves.

Force on Native Students (1977), the Indian Association of Alberta states:

> Throughout the years since signing of the Treaties in Alberta, counsellors and teachers have tended to direct Indian students into vocationally-oriented high school programs (Indian Association of Alberta, 1977:5).

This and other changes mentioned above increased Native student's chances of accessing and completing post-secondary programs. However, many Native students continued to lack the basic academic requirements needed to gain entry to post-secondary institutions. For some, pursuing a western education becomes a sign of rejection of one's Indian-ness, especially when it appears to be in collaboration with the larger society (University of Alberta Senate, 1978:14).

For these reasons and others, Native students simply did not envision the possibility of gaining access to, and successfully completing, a post-secondary education.

Universities and colleges acknowledged the need to adapt to the needs of a changing population by incorporating non-traditional admissions policies.[7] Gene Degen states:

> There have been a significant number of special support programs throughout North American in the last 15 years to provide more equitable opportunities for educationally disadvantaged people to achieve post-secondary education (Degen, 1985:8).

---

[7] These policies included access by the Disabled, Aboriginals and Women.

The 1980s brought increasing demands for non-traditional students to continue their pursuit of higher education (Skuba-Jackson, 1984:1). Many universities,[8] including the University of Alberta, undertook the initiative to provide alternative access programs to the Non-Traditional student.[9] These innovative programs made a university education a reality for those capable of meeting the academic challenges, but who for various reasons, were unable to gain access under the previous, more rigid admission guidelines.

One of the University of Alberta's alternative access programs, the Transition Year Program (TYP), is designed exclusively for Aboriginal people. Since its inception, this one year program has been the access route for approximately 70% of the University of Alberta's Native Student population (University of Alberta, 1992:1).

The Transition Year Program offers Aboriginal students in their first year of studies at the University of Alberta a combination of support services, remedial studies and 3 full-term credit courses. These courses later apply towards a degree, if and when, the student is admitted to a Faculty.[10]

---

[8] Four universities in Canada had Transition Year Programs: The University of Alberta, The University of Calgary, The University of Toronto and Dalhousie University. The University of Alberta and The University of Calgary programs were specifically for Native students. The University of Calgary Transition Year Program was discontinued in 1990.

[9] A non-traditional student is one who does not go directly to university from high school or does not have a senior matriculation.

[10] If the student is accepted into the Faculty of Arts and does not have a "Language other than English" at the Grade 12 matriculation level, this course clears an academic deficiency and is not transferred. Students are required to take an introductory language class; most TYP students take Native Studies 101 (Cree).

A transition program includes procedures for careful monitoring of the performance, experience and problems of special admission students and attempts to ensure that they are academically prepared to meet the demands and rigors of university work (Sharpe, 1989a:2). During the Transition Year, the students must complete all courses and maintain a 5.0 Grade Point Average.[11]

Transition Year support services include both academic and personal counselling. Remedial studies including writing and study skills workshops and tutorials are delivered on an individual basis or in a small group setting. Native Student Services employs a TYP coordinator who monitors the Student's progress throughout the academic year.

The participants of the Transition Year Program generally derive from two groups. The first group are younger Aboriginal students who have a high school diploma but whose grades are not high enough to enter university under the regular admission guidelines (Sharpe, 1989a:2). The second, older group are those who have little or no secondary education and who may not have been in the educational system for a long time, perhaps even decades. Both types of students are included in the population of interest to the Transition Year Program. The trend of younger Aboriginal students attending the Transition Year Program is the opposite of what is being experienced in mainstream university enrollment where the student population is getting older.

---

[11] The University of Alberta uses a 9 Point Grading System. The grades are as follows: Excellent (9 &8), Good (7 & 6), Satisfactory (5&4), Unsatisfactory (3,2 & 1) The minimum grade required to pass is 4.0. Grades lower than 4.0 constitutes a failure. The Arts Faculty requires a minimum 5.5 GPA to continue studies from one year to the next; while the Science Faculty requires a 5.0 GPA to continue.

The University of Alberta initiated its first attempt at a Transition Year Program in 1985. Over the years, there have been many changes to the program's structure, brokers and participants. However, the mandate, "to assist Aboriginal students to gain access to the University of Alberta" has remained the same(Sharpe, 1989a:2).

Purpose of the Study

As a Native student at the University of Alberta, I became interested in this program because many of my friends gained admission through it. Most of them did not have the academic background to enter University through conventional routes, but they have done well academically in spite of that assumed deficiency. The Transition Year Program gave them an opportunity to challenge themselves in a way that they would not have dreamed possible. Ideally, the Transition Year Program gets them into University and gives them a start; after that, it is up to them.

The literature that describes programs of this nature is not readily available because most of the descriptions and evaluations are completed as part of project reports and distributed only with the institutions concerned, or to funding agencies (Archibald et al, 1993). A description of the developments of the Transition Year Program at the University of Alberta would thus be a valuable contribution to the literature of indigenous people's access to tertiary education.

This study provides two types of analysis. The first consists of a quantitative analysis of student records of Transition Year Program (TYP) participants from 1985/86 to 1991/92. These data have been extracted from student records obtained from the University of Alberta Registrar's Office. The data will show the number of students admitted into the program, the number who complete and the number of those admitted into the Faculties. Various other indicators of student success such as Grade Point Average will also be reviewed.

The second part of the study will locate the TYP in the lives of its former students to determine if and how the Transition Year Program was important in their present academic or occupational situation. The personal experiences and perceptions of the University campus and community will be detailed. The data will be analyzed to flush out themes or patterns evident in student experiences.

The Transition Year Program is 8 years old and beyond summary statements intended only for reportage with the university community, there has been little documentation of the program. There has been no comprehensive analysis of the program's impact on the Native student population at the University of Alberta. This study is not intended to be evaluative of the program, but descriptive.

Statement of the Research Problem

The research problem is to determine if the Transition Year Program has been important in the present academic and/or occupational situations of former TYP students, and if so, how.

By addressing that question, it might be possible to indicate how the experience of attempting higher education affects people who had not had higher education as a primary goal throughout the earlier part of their lives.

In addition to the primary research question, a number of secondary research questions will be studied. In keeping with the primary research question, the subsidiary question maintain a focus on student experience: the student and their individual situations before, during and after the Transition Year Program.

The questions addressed to the students are:

1. Why did you want to pursue a University education?
2. How did you learn of the Transition Year Program?
3. Why did you enrol in the program?
4. How did you manage the year in the program.? (financially, academically and emotionally)
5. Did you complete the program? If not, why?
6. How would you describe your experience in the program?
7. What are you doing now?
8. Did the Transition Year Program assist you in obtaining your present situation? If so, how?

Review of Literature

This literature review will not attempt to deal with all the Aboriginal post secondary education literature or all the theories of unequal access to post secondary institutions. Rather it will refer to major works and theoreticians in order to provide an indication of the nature of the relevant literature.

Social Theory

There are several types of theoretical explanations as to why some students obtain post secondary education and others do not. Most of these theories are based on class/caste conflict. This conflict is based in either social structural terms or in the perpetuation of inequality in psycho-social terms.

Anisef and Okihiro, in their book, Winners and Losers, state that post-secondary institutions see their role as a vehicle for upward mobility for minority or disadvantaged groups (Anisef and Okihiro, 1984:xiii).

Formal education is future oriented (Ogbu, 1978:19). Formal education trains children in non-traditional roles outside their community. Ogbu states that education gives members of a caste minority skills to perform low status tasks in a society. This class stratification is carried out by segregation, tracking, and career related curriculum (Ogbu, 1978:26). The "job-ceiling" theory states that there are jobs above the ceiling, the most desirable and those below, the less desirable. Members of a caste minority are not able to occupy the desirable jobs in society because they are not able to compete freely for these positions. As a result, minority members occupy positions below the job ceiling (Ogbu, 1978:29). The job ceiling stunts the motivation of the minority group, so they are unlikely to attempt advanced schooling. They feel they will not be able to get a good job so why try.

John Porter states that the barriers to equal education are both social and psychological (Porter, 1973:168). Social barriers to unequal education include: family income level, family size and availability of quality education. Psychological barriers occur when a child is raised in an environment where education is not viewed as important.

Pierre Bourdieu's "Cultural Capital Theory" rejects the theory that higher educational achievement of the middle and upper classes is due to genetic superiority or difference, claiming it is socially determined by advantageous cultural characteristics which the children of these groups learn at home and already enjoy when they begin school. Language superiority, general culture and heightened awareness of the mechanics of the school system all help the "cultured " student flourish in a system (Bourdieu, 1973:487).

Basil Bernstein, in his study of the language used in schools states that school curriculum is designed for and by the middle class. As a result, students from lower class backgrounds are not familiar with terms used in classrooms and are placed at a disadvantage in testing and school achievement (Bernstein, 1971:143).

The preceding theories offer an explanation about the structural factors that may keep Aboriginal students from post secondary studies. For example, Ogbu's theory of "job ceiling" theory relates directly to the the type of occupational paths selected for Aboriginals by government bureaucrats (Indian agents) or teachers. Aboriginals were victims of academic streaming which channelled them into occupations below the job ceiling.

Aboriginals In Post Secondary

The Minnesota Private Colleges Research Foundation conducted a study on Native students attending post-secondary institutions.

The data included demographic information on students currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions. The students were asked where they came from, how far they were away from home, if they came from an urban or rural setting and why they attended a specific school (Minnesota Private Colleges Research Foundation, 1974:6/7). The study found that Native students went to specific institutions because the institution appeared to have a commitment to them. The commitment was measured in the type of Native based courses the institution offered, the number and quality of Aboriginal instructors and the type of support services provided to Aboriginal students. Prospective students obtained information about the school from current and former students.

Estelle Fuchs, Associate Director for the National Study of American Indian Education, studied the subjective views of Native student attending post secondary institutions. Although some of these students were involved in Transition Year Programs, they were not asked questions specific to the program. Students were asked about their programs and how they felt about their university experiences.

Fuchs concluded from her study that if an academic institution intends to actively recruit Aboriginal students it must have a plan to help the student succeed. She states that it is not enough to simply bring the Aboriginal student to campus but an on-going support network must to in place to assist the student (Fuchs, 1971:22).

According to Fuchs, post secondary institutions must to flexible in their admission criteria to enable Aboriginal students to gain admission. She also observes that if an Aboriginal student does not succeed at post secondary study that it may not be entirely the student's fault and that the institution must shared the blame (Fuchs, 1971:24).

Alternative Access Programs

There have been a variety of "alternative access" programs in Canadian universities for many years. Most of the existing literature on these programs in Canada is evaluative in nature.

The Dalhousie University Report on its Transition Year Program suggests that Universities offer Transition Year Programs because they feel a moral and societal obligation to assist members of minorities or students from low socio-economic status backgrounds (Dalhousie University, 1989:X). According to the Dalhousie report, it appears that most Transition Year Programs have had problems from time to time and at some points in the history of the program the host institution must weigh the benefits and determine whether to continue. The problems stem from lack of funding, lack of political will on the part of the institution or lack of motivation by the participants in the program (Dalhousie University, 1989:6).

Conrad Sharrow in his study of admission considerations for Aboriginal students to Post Secondary institutions looks at the role and responsibilities of the institution delivering programs to native students. His information comes from people involved in the programs; the Director, the Counsellors, the Recruitment Officers and the Students. Sharrow states that each person has a unique perception. Program directors are concerned about retention rates of participants and the subsequent success of the program.

Staff members working in the programs do a balancing act. They must encourage the students to participate and offer support but must also get the student to do things for himself. A little assistance can help a person but too much assistance can make him dependent (Sharrow, 1971:55).

Recruitment officers must determine whether a person has the ability to complete the program. Mature students make up the majority of Transition Year students. These students have been out of school for a number of years but have gained life and work experience. These students realize that you must have an education to get ahead and are very hard working (Sharrow, 1971:53).

Students have opinions on the merits and the drawbacks of the program. They agree that the program in beneficial because they were able to gain access to the University. However, they believe there should be more communication between the staff and students

The institutes which have the greatest degree of success have developed an on-campus educational program that has been specifically designed to anticipate the student's needs from the moment he arrives at school (Sharrow, 1971:55).

Alternative Access Programs at the University of Alberta

Reference to "alternative access" programs at the University of Alberta date back to the beginning of the University. The University of Alberta Calendar (1910-11) makes reference to "Conditioned Students" who are students who have not completed their matriculation examination. (University of Alberta, 1910:10) This concession can be viewed as an alternative access program.

Another "alternative access" program at the University of Alberta is the Unclassified Student Program. In a study of Unclassified Students on the University of Alberta campus, Laurie Skuba-Jackson states that universities must be flexible and adjust their admission criteria to meet the needs of a changing population (Skuba-Jackson,1984:1). The Unclassified student program began at the University of Alberta in 1982 on a two year trial basis. An unclassified student is permitted to register in a limited number of University courses. Documentation of past education is normally not required for admission to the program except to demonstrate a proficiency in the English language or to establish that prerequisite courses have been completed. Students must obtain a minimum grade of 4.0 in all courses taken under this designation.

Since unclassified students do not have the academic background of traditional students, one might expect them to do worse. However, Skuba-Jackson states that unclassified student marks are comparable to traditional students in the Arts and Education faculties (Skuba-Jackson,1984:74).

Skuba-Jackson found that the unclassified student program was an effective tool in helping non-traditional students gain access to post-secondary studies at the University of Alberta. The popularity and effectiveness of the program resulted in its continuation.

Methodology and Procedures

This study has two parts. The first part establishes a context for the discussion of student's reports of experience, which is the focus of this work. The first part is a tabulation and an analysis of

Transition Year Student records from the academic years 1985-86 to 1991-92 obtained from the Registrar's office. It is possible to derive the following data from these records: (1) the number of students enrolled in the program over the years; (2) the number of students who completed the program; (3) the number of students who continued their studies in Faculties at the University of Alberta; (4) the Grade Point Average (GPA) of completing students and those admitted into Faculties (5) the rate of retention after students are admitted into the Faculties; (6) the number of students who discontinue Faculty studies by year of admission and year of study and; (7) the prior educational achievement of students admitted into Faculties. Areas of difference between TYP students who completed the program and whose who did not are documented from student records.

The second part of the study is based on interviews. To supplement the sketchy and incomplete documentary history of the program, interviews were conducted with key personnel who were associated with the program at different stages of its development. In addition, the focus of the thesis and the data source that addresses the primary research question is the series of interviews conducted to document student experience in the program with special attention paid to how their experiences in the program relate to their life histories. Each interviewed student's perception about the TYP and campus is addressed and the reasons and circumstances surrounding their enrollment in the Transition Year are noted. The student informants were provided transcripts of interviews and asked to read them to ensure accuracy. The student's perceptions about the TYP and campus life will be addressed.

Selection of participants was determined by their willingness to be involved in the study and their ability to remember details of their TYP experience. A number of data gathering techniques were used: advertising the study on posters, asking former CUT, CUTP and TYP students for names of their classmates, and finally self selection of former TYP students by the researcher.

Two students were interviewed from both the first and last years of the program and one student was interviewed from each year between. This provides a total of 9 interviews.

To determine the success of the TYP, more than just program completion rates must be used. Other factors such as gaining self-confidence, the ability to gain meaningful employment or living a better quality of life as a result of the TYP can be viewed as measures of success. For example, did a participant recommend the program to friends or relatives?

Limitations and Implications

Limitations

This study is limited to students who attended the Transition Year program and its predecessors for the 7 years of completed programs. The program is studied from its inception from the 1985/86 to the 1991/92 academic year. The present year, 1992/93 is not included in this analysis. Records for students who have common names were not included because it was too difficult to gather enough information about these students from the university data bank.

There was an under-representation of students who did not complete the program. Eight of the nine students interviewed for this study completed the program. Many former TYP students who did not complete the program were approached to participate in this study but they chose not to participate since they felt that they would be stigmatized for "quitting".

Since data for the early years of the program (prior to the University of Alberta taking over the program in its entirety in 1989/90) was sketchy, the researcher had to depend on the recollections and perceptions of key personnel involved in the program. This is not to imply that this input was not factual but only that memories can fade and perceptions can change over time.

The data showing the students admitted to Faculties is limited to those students who chose to continue their post secondary educations at the University of Alberta, rather than attend some other university.

Implications

a) This information may reaffirm beliefs in the effectiveness and value of this and other similar programs.

b) This study may provide useful information to those interested in pursuing entry through the Transition Year Program.

c) This study will assist those involved in TYP or other similar programs to make improvements suggested by former participants.

d) This study may provide information to the University administration and the Aboriginal community about the need for changes in program support.

Definition of Terms[12]

Transition Year Program: a one year program administered by the University of Alberta's Native Student Services designed to help aboriginal students gain access to University studies.

Aboriginal Student: a student identified by criteria set out by the University of Alberta.

Non-Matriculated Adult Student: a student who is 24 years of age and who has lived in Alberta, the Yukon or the Northwest Territories for 1 year prior to the commencement of classes Non-matriculated Adult Students must complete specific Alberta Grade 12 courses or equivalents.

Unclassified student: An unclassified student is permitted to register in a limited number of University courses. Documentation of past education is normally not required except to demonstrate English Language Proficiency or to establish that prerequisite courses have been completed. Students must obtain a minimum grade of 4.0 in all courses taken under this status.

Post-Secondary Education: A program of studies offered by a post-secondary institution for which completion of secondary school studies or equivalent is usually a prerequisite.

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[12] All terms from the University of Alberta Calendar 1991/92.

Overview

The first chapter includes the rationale for the Transition Year Program, the statement of the research problem, the research questions, a literature review, a description of the research methodology, a statement regarding the significance of the study and the definition of terms.

Chapter 2 describes the history and background of the Transition Year Program at the University of Alberta. The philosophy and mandate of the program will be analyzed. The evolution of the program from its beginning in 1985/86 to the 1991/92 academic year will be described.

Chapter 3 involves a quantitative analysis of data drawn from the student records obtained from the Registrar's office. A variety of data points will be examined.

Chapter 4 analyzes interview data obtained from informants regarding their experiences in the Transition Year Program. The research questions stated in Chapter 1 will be addressed.

Chapter 5 will include the analysis and conclusions drawn from the data.

Chapter 2

Evolution of the Transition Year Program

Since the mid 1970s, the University of Alberta has increased its efforts to attract Aboriginal students to campus (University of Alberta General Faculties Council, 1992:1). A variety of university reports stated that Aboriginals were not enrolling in post secondary institutions and the University administration acknowledged that Aboriginals were "grossly under-represented at about one-tenth of equitable representation" (University of Alberta,1984:26). Concluding remarks of the University of Alberta Senate Report on the Task Force on Native Students states:

> In order to serve our Native community better, the University of Alberta must expand its academic programs and support services for native students, and facilitate and encourage consultation with Alberta's native community (Senate Report, 1978:2).

The university community was aware that many studies of Native people dealt with negative academic aspects: high drop-out rates and low academic achievement (General Faculties Council, 1984:i). From 1965 to 1971 a group of University of Alberta academics, "The Friends of the Indian", formed to "see how the University could be of service to the Indian community" (General Faculties Council, 1984:i).

In a written submission to the 1978 Senate Task Force, Professor Johann Steiner proposed that the University of Alberta actively recruit Native students and initiate a program to assist this group. One of the major problems deterring Aboriginals from post secondary admission was their lack of academic background.

The Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), a provincial political organization representing Alberta Indian Chiefs, stated:

> The IAA rejects the notion that the only road to educational advancement for the Indian people lies with the education of the young. We advocate that ALL Indians must be educated if the Indian people are to make any kind of change in the present dire circumstances that depict Indian lives. (Indian Association of Alberta, 1972:6)

The University set out to to increase Native participation in post secondary study. One such attempt was the Morning Star Project in which education courses were provided off campus to Native students in their community.[13]

Historically, the educational attainment of Aboriginals in Canada has been dismal. In 1967, the Hawthorn Report stated that 94 percent of Aboriginal students in Canada did not complete Grade 12. That figure had not changed when the Alberta government commissioned a report on the state of Indian education in 1972. The report stated that "approximately 94% of Canadian Indians who enter Grade 1 fail to complete Grade 12 "(Alberta Education Task Force Report on Intercultural Education, 1972:100). In 1986, Ryan

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[13] The Morning Star Project began in 1975 with 33 students. The program was delivered at Blue Quills School near St. Paul. After two years of study, the students received an interim teaching certificate and were given five years to complete their education degrees. (University of Alberta Senate, 1978:56) This program was designed to provide native teachers who would return to their communities after completion of the program. The program was jointly administered by Blue Quills Native Education Council and the University of Alberta (University of Alberta Senate, Report of the Task Force on Native Students). University of Alberta,1978. P.56

MacDonald in his study of socio-economic conditions of off-reserve Indians stated that 41% of off-reserve Indians aged 15 and over has less than a Grade 9 education. This compared to educational attainment of the general population in which 17% have less than Grade 9 (MacDonald, 1991:4). It was clear that Aboriginals were not enrolling in post secondary institutions because they were not completing high school. If the university were to assist Aboriginal students gain entry it would have to find a way to break down this academic barrier.

The University of Alberta Senate Task Force Report on Native Students, 1978 made a number of recommendations to increase Aboriginal participation on campus. These recommendations were directed to the President of the University, The Boards of Governors and The General Faculties Council. (See Appendix B) Recommendation 5 addressed the need for "flexibility to recognize the work and educational experience of Native people" with regard to University admissions (Senate Task Force Report,1978:4).

To fulfill their mandate of improving access to Aboriginals to the University of Alberta campus, administration had to develop a flexible access route. The University of Alberta already had a program in place to assist "non-traditional" students through the Unclassified Student classification[14] created in 1982. The University of Alberta made provisions for non-traditional students as early as 1910.[15] The inadequate academic backgrounds of most Aboriginal students caused them to be classified as non-traditional students. The University of Alberta set out to improve the accessibility of Aboriginal students to post secondary study through the Coordinated University Transfer Program.

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[14] The Unclassified Student designation has been in existence since 1982. It was set in place to "provide open access to all prospective students, allowing them to register in credit courses without the necessity of Faculty acceptance." It was initiated and governed by the Office of the Registrar on a two year trial and continues to the present. (Skuba-Jackson, 1984:3)

1. Coordinated University Transfer (CUT)

Information in this section is drawn from university documents and interviews with university personnel, especially those who worked with the CUT program. At this point in the research, statements about student participation and continuation in the CUT, or withdrawal from it, will be taken as accurate. However,data analysis in the following chapter will determine the situation as found in student transcripts. Thus this section should be read as both a description of the program and its environment, and a description of the beliefs about the program and the university which built up through time.

The Coordinated University Transfer program began in the 1985- 86 academic year.[16] The program was administered solely by the the Office of Native Student Services. The staff of Native Student Services provided a variety of services that were available by student self-selection and individual request: personal counselling, crisis intervention, personal referrals to other university services, student counselling, time management counselling and practical information about housing, daycare and transportation to CUT students (University of Alberta, 1984:29).

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[15] The University of Alberta Calendar (1910-11) makes reference to "Conditioned Students" who are students who have not completed their matriculation examination.

[16] The Coordinated University Transfer program was first mentioned in the Office of Student Services Annual Report 1984/85. An interview with the Director of Native Student Services revealed that the program was in the planning stages during that year. In a pilot of the concept, four Aboriginal students were registered as unclassified students and given supplemental tutoring. For the purposes of this study the 1985/86 academic year will be considered the first year of CUT program operation because of the scarcity of documentation from the previous year.

In the early 1980s, the Director of Native Student Services, Dr. Carl Urion had expressed a need for an alternative access program for Aboriginal students at the University of Alberta because there had been an increase in enquiries about university access from the Native community. A report by the Office of Native Student Services stated that Dr. Urion received 300-500 inquiries per year from Native people asking about university admission or university based careers (Native Student Services, 1988:4). There had also been a number of alternative access programs developed at universities across Canada[17] and the University of Alberta had yet to develop one.

Dr. Reinhild Boehm, Director of Native Student Services from 1987-92 was the Regional Coordinator of Athabasca University when CUT program began in 1985. She stated that Dr. Carl Urion, Director of Native Student Services had had a number of Aboriginal people approach him about attending university (Boehm, 1992). "They were interested in pursuing post secondary study but most did not have the admission criteria. As a result, he could not do much for them" (Boehm, 1992).

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[17] Natalie Sharpe's study, "University Native Transitional Year Programs: A Canada-Wide Survey" states that the University of British Columbia began its Native Indian Teacher Education program in 1974, the University of Toronto and Dalhousie University began their Transition Year Programs in 1970.

Dr. Urion approached Athabasca University[18] with the possibility of considering the University of Alberta campus as a site to deliver a program. Athabasca University was an open university which delivers courses both on-site at a variety of locations in north/central Alberta and through correspondence courses. It had been involved with special access programs for Aboriginals in two centres north and west of Edmonton, one sponsored by the Yellowhead Tribal Council in Spruce Grove and one sponsored by a coalition of regional education and aboriginal groups in Slave Lake.

The on-site courses were teacher delivered correspondence courses. "The CUT program began a step below that. They were really correspondence students who could meet with a tutor on the side" (Boehm, 1992). "In the beginning is was hard to determine if it was the University of Alberta delivering an Athabasca University program or if Athabasca University was delivering a program on the U of A campus" (Boehm, 1992).

Natalie Sharpe, Coordinated University Transfer Program Coordinator during the 1988/89 academic year and author of "University Native Transitional Year Programs: A Canada-Wide Survey" writes:

> ...many of the universities that do provide special admission statutes for native people (affirmative action programs) have not done anything specifically in the area of offering a special program that guides, monitors and counsels the students in the first year of their

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[18] Athabasca University, a distance university with an open admission policy, was established in 1972 by the Alberta government to relieve the increased demand for university education.

> university program (the kind of assistance provided by a transition year program) (Sharpe,1989:1).

Jeanine Laboucane, the Coordinated University Transfer program coordinator for the 1985-86 academic year described the CUT as:

> a program designed to help the students develop some of the skills they would need to successfully compete in the larger university setting (Laboucane, 1992).

Urion stated that prior to the inception of CUT, much of the University's commitment to Native people was off campus (Urion,1992). The university had not made a formal commitment of on-going, on-campus program. In fact, the Transition Year Program was not given university approval as such until April, 1992.[19] Prior to that time, the program had been seen as a pilot project. "No one from the University community ever approved the program, we just started it". There was a feeling that they would have to prove themselves before they would get the University's endorsement so great care was taken to look for precedents for every individual aspect of the program so that it could not be said that a new program had begun without authorization (Urion, 1992).

The CUT program was a cooperative effort between Native Student Services and Athabasca University. In essence, the program was a satellite program similar to others that Athabasca University delivered at various locations in northern Alberta. The planners wanted to create a program precisely focused on tutorial support which would eventually lead to the student applying for admission as a transfer student to a Faculty at the University of Alberta (Urion, 1992).

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[19] The General Faculties Council gave approval to the Transition Year Program in the Aboriginal Student Policy in April,1992.

In the first year of the program, 1985-86, Athabasca University offered a variety of courses to the CUT students but later limited its selection because the course tutors were too expensive. Athabasca University offered Sociology, English and a range of core courses that were well adapted to classroom delivery.

Delivering Athabasca University courses on the University of Alberta campus had drawbacks because students were isolated from the general university population. "When students come to campus, they want to be with other students. This was not happening with the CUT students" (Boehm, 1992).

The CUT was similar to other alternative access programs but unique in its components[20] (Urion, 1992). Dr. Urion described the development of the Coordinated University Transfer program (CUT) as "a channeling of existing services -- already on campus or in the community for the general population -- to Indian students" (Urion, 1992). The philosophy of the program was to "look at services already on campus that catered to the general population and channel those into servicing of the Indian population" (Urion, 1992).

Athabasca University was instrumental in maintaining the early program because it did not charge Native Student Services any of the program costs it incurred. The program was unique because it had many free services.

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[20] The Transition Year Programs at the University of Toronto and Dalhousie served Natives and other Visible minorities; while the CUT served Natives exclusively.

Eventually, Native Student Services began charging the students for tutorials and other overhead expenses. The costs were worked out on a per student basis. The costs would be listed separately from course tuition fees. Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) fees went to Native Student Services and the tuition fees went to the Registrar's office.

Program funding has been a problem since the beginning. The University of Alberta provided space to house the program, secretarial support and the infrastructure to support it. The university's financial contribution to the program was in the form of absorption of hidden costs. Later, at various times the University of Alberta contributions totaled approximately $20,000 per year in "Services in Kind"[21] (Boehm, 1992). "There was plenty of verbal support but unfortunately little financial support" (Laboucane, 1992).

The University of Alberta did not provide core funding for the program.[22] The program staff solicited funds from outside sources.[23] Funding uncertainty caused the program to be in jeopardy every year. Not only was funding a constant worry but a significant portion of the coordinator's time was taken up trying to secure funding for the program's continuation. This time could have been used helping the students (Laboucane, 1992).

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[21] "Services in Kind" refers to services provided to support the program rather than actually funding.

[22] The Coordinator's position received core funding in 1990. Prior to 1990, the coordinator's position was externally funded.

[23] The Office of Native Student Services did consulting projects for various outside agencies and used the funds generated by the consultation to enable it to continue the CUT program. For example, the Office was contracted by Northland School Division to do a community liaison project.

Insecurity in funding meant that the coordinator's position was never secure, always a short term appointment. It was not healthy for the program to have a new coordinator each year, although in some regards it can be beneficial (Urion, 1992). Each coordinator came into the program with new ideas and new energy. The students were not adversely affected by the new coordinators because there were new students every year (Boehm, 1992).

Many attempts were made to have the University commit to core funding. In 1985, a tripartite agreement was drafted by Native Students Services to involve the University, the Provincial and Federal Government (Department of Indian Affairs) (Laboucane, 1992). A number of proposals were written to the University administration but none of them were taken "seriously" (Laboucane, 1992). There had been successful cooperative ventures between the University of Alberta and organizations in an attempt to increase Aboriginal access to post-secondary institutions[24] but the University appeared hesitant to support this venture (Urion, 1992).

There were misgivings about running the program. It cannot be determined whether the office actually gained by sponsoring the Coordinated University Transfer program. It ran at great expense to Native Student Services (Urion, 1992). Native Student Service's permanent staff administered the program extra to their "regular" duties as no additional funds or staff members were allotted to the

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[24] There were agreements made between the NWT government and University of Alberta. There was also the Morning Star Program from 1975-81.

Office.to help administer the program.[25] It appeared that the program was thought of as peripheral to the mandate of the Office (Urion, 1992).

In an interview, the then Director of Native Student Services stated that he "could not pay people what they are worth and could not offer them job security. I had to depend on their commitment to the program" (Urion, 1992).

There was some resentment from Native students (non CUT students) on campus because so many of the resources of Native Student Services were being put into the program.[26] Although the program cost Native Student Services, the Director felt that "given the patterns of access to the university (for Aboriginal students), you could see that it had to be done" (Urion, 1992). The 1983-85 levels of acceptance in Faculties was so low that NSS did not feel it could have taken a formal program forward and have the program accepted.

Prior to the Coordinated University Transfer program, Native Student Services acting as an advocate for Native students on campus, perceived that the major faculties of Science, Arts and Education were "cool" to the idea of admitting native students into their faculties under special admissions.[27]

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[25] Although the TYP coordinator's position was base funded by the University in 1990, the Office of Native Student Services lost their Community Liaison Worker's position.

[26] Urion estimated that 25-60% of Native Student Services resources were placed in the program.

[27] Urion stated that 1982-86 he had approached personnel in several Faculties, and particularly the Arts, Science and Education Faculties because they represented the greatest demand, to discuss the admission of Native students in a special access program, but they were 'not interested." He said that in such discussions a representative of the Science faculty stated that they were not interested in having Indian students in his faculty. The reason was that the Faculty had to maintain academic standards: the

During the early years of the program, the students were not as academically prepared as they were in later years.[28] The early students were selected on maturity, motivation and some objective indication of academic potential criteria such as achievement tests. "Most students did not have a high school diploma but they had potential to succeed in the post secondary realm" (Laboucane, 1992). Due to limited personnel and funding the program limited its admission to approximately 15 participants.

Students were admitted under the unclassified student designation. As unclassified students they were not required to provide formal documentation to the Registrar about their past educational attainments, or to the Faculties, because they were not enrolled in a degree program (Laboucane, 1992).

There was a high drop out rate during the early years. In the 1986/87 academic year, the second year of the program, only 2 of the original 11 satisfactorily completed the program.[29] The high attrition rate was attributed to a lax screening process. Most of the early students were non-matriculated adult students who lacked a high school diploma but showed potential to be successful by motivation and life experience.

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admission of Indian students, it was inferred, would compromise those standards. Similarly, a "gatekeeper" official in the Faculty of Education commented that Indian students were "all marginal", and a representative of the Faculty of Arts maintained that it was a disservice to Indian students to admit any of them to such a special access program.

[28] In 1990/91 the age limit was changed from 24 to 18 to allow students to enroll in the program directly after graduating from Grade 12.

[29] The judgement of "satisfactory completion" means that the student completed the program and was eligible to apply to a Faculty for admission. Unsatisfactory completion means that the student completed the program but was required to withdraw because minimum academic standards were not met. Thus the student could not apply to a Faculty.

Some testing was done to determine the student's academic preparedness for the program. Tests were administered to determine the participant's composition, vocabulary, reasoning and comprehension skills (Laboucane, 1992). However, the testing could not predict the participant's ability to cope with the academic demands of post secondary course work (Laboucane, 1992).

There were problems with the program being governed by two institutions. Students were on the University of Alberta campus but were formally full-time Athabasca University students. This remained a problem until the University of Alberta took over the program entirely in 1988. It was troublesome for the students to have to adjust to different timetables and different marking systems. It would have been much easier for the students to have been involved in the institutional bureaucracy of only one system.

Eventually the Arts Faculty stated that they would admit CUT students if they successfully completed the program and maintained the minimum GPA of 5.0.[30] There were requests from the students to enter other Faculties but admission was not granted until later.[31]

The Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) program allowed students to take two Athabasca University courses[32] and one University of Alberta course. The A.U. courses were tutor led. Students had access to some of the services on campus allowed to University of Alberta students such as library and Physical Education facilities (University of Alberta,1985:25). In addition to these courses, the students were given a number of study skills courses and workshops in such fields as time management, note taking and exam writing.

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[30] This admission criteria is the same as that given the Unclassified student

[31] Admission to other Faculties will be discussed later in this chapter.

[32] The courses offered to the CUT students were a combination of high school courses (English 30) and Athabasca University courses (Geography).

2. Coordinated University Transition Program (CUTP)

The Coordinated University Transfer program (CUT) evolved into the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) in 1988. The CUTP was administered much like its predecessor, the CUT, with an emphasis on providing the students with academic and personal support.

During the 1988/89 academic year, the program was taken over by the University of Alberta which meant the program participants were governed solely by University of Alberta policy. The program change was made to accommodate both the students and the administering institutions.

Prior to the takeover, program participants were at a disadvantaged because they were governed by two institutions with different standards and policies. Problems encountered by the students were alleviated. For example, The University of Alberta administration was able to more accurately assess the students' academic ability by setting the achievement standards. When the students were taking courses from Athabasca University, the University of Alberta could not judge the equivalence of grading criteria. For example, a grade of 7 at Athabasca University may only be a 6 at the University of Alberta.[33] Also, there had been considerable delay in the transfer of marks between the two institutions (Native Student Services, 1988:11). This was problematic for both the student and the institution.

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[33] The example takes into consideration such factors as class size, grading on the Bell Curve and student competition.

One of the most significant changes to the program was the number of unclassified courses the CUTP participant was able to take. Prior to this change, participants were allowed only 1 unclassified course at a time. The CUTP received permission from Hugh King, Director of the Unclassified Student Program, to allow students to take 3 unclassified courses. Natalie Sharpe, the CUTP coordinator in 1988/89 academic year described the University as, "very open and enthusiastic about the changes to the program" but stated that university personnel were:

> concerned that there be someone on site to take care of the needs of the students. Since unclassified students do not follow a program, there was a chance that they would take courses that were not suitable or not transferable to their programs (Sharpe, 1992).

Native Student Services and particularly the CUTP coordinator assumed the responsibility of ensuring that the students enrolled in appropriate courses. Previously, there had been complaints that some Athabasca University courses did not transfer to the University of Alberta. Students were taking courses and not getting credit for them. This wasted the student's time and resources.

Native Student Services and the Unclassified Student Office developed a program which consisted of 3 half courses per term. The criteria for continuation in this program was progression through the courses. The students had to maintain a minimum 4.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). If a student received less than 4.0 GPA, the student would have to withdraw from subsequent half courses but would be allowed to complete full year courses. Students sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs or by their Bands were required to take 3 courses to qualify for funding as a full-time student. If a sponsored student failed a course his/her funding was discontinued. In addition, if a student failed a course as an unclassified student, he/she was unable to register at the University of Alberta for a three year period following the failure.

Another change to the program was that it was restructured to accommodate mainly non-matriculated adult students.[34] The 1987/88 CUT coordinator felt that a more highly structured program, as in the Arts Faculty, would reduce the number of unclassified courses taken by the student and that Faculty admission would motivate the students to work harder and make them feel that they were "part of the University" (Sharpe, 1992). During the 1988/89 academic year, CUTP participants were restricted to admission into the Arts Faculty after successful completion of the CUTP. The Arts Faculty admitted CUTP students if they successfully completed the program with a minimum 5.5 GPA.

Program entrance requirements were increased in an attempt to lower the attrition rate by admitting more academically prepared students.[35] The higher entrance requirements reflecting these changes slightly reduced the number of applicants. The entrance testing remained the same as in previous years; a reading comprehension test, a mathematics test and a personal interview. During the personal interview the student was introduced to a contract drafted by the CUTP coordinator (see Appendix D). The contract outlined the student's responsibilities as a participant in the program. In addition, students admitted into the program in this academic year still had to pass the University of Alberta's Writing Competency Test (WCT).[36]

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[34] Although the program was restructured to accommodate non-matriculated adult students the majority of the students enrolled in the program gained entry through the "Unclassified Student" category.

[35] The CUTP coordinator felt not being academically prepared was the major reason for people dropping out of the program.

The CUTP coordinator monitored the student's progress throughout the year by maintaining constant contact with the students themselves, their professors, and their tutors. Course tutorials were offered by the Faculties. Writing skills, note taking and stress management workshops were provided by the students thorough the Student Services Office on campus.

As Unclassified students, CUTP participants had special arrangements made by Native Student Services to allow them access to library services and recreation facilities (Sharpe, 1992). The CUTP students paid the same tuition fees as faculty students but were not student union members and were not able to use university health services (King, 1992).

Native Student Services still charged CUTP students for tutorials and other overhead expenses incurred as they had in previous years. The costs were worked out on a per student basis and paid in addition to their regular tuition fees which were paid to the Registrar's Office.

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[36] The Writing Competency Test (WCT) began in 1983 and was discontinued in 1989.

The CUTP was still not core funded by the University. Native Student Services continued to support much of its work in the Coordinated University Transfer Program from outside sources. During the 1988/89 academic year, Native Student Services completed two projects to fund the Coordinated University Transfer Program: a career development project through the Native Education Project, Alberta Education which netted the CUTP the sum of $34,000 and the Enhanced Employment Skills Project which contributed and additional $15,000 (University of Alberta, 1989:34).

The Coordinated University Transfer Program only maintained its structure for one academic year. It transformed into the Transition Year Program during the following (1989/90) academic year.

3. Transition Year Program (TYP)

As outlined above, what is now called the Transition Year Program at the University of Alberta has undergone many changes since its inception in 1985. In 1989, the name was changed to the Transition Year Program (TYP) from the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP). The name "Transition Year Program" is recognized for programs of a similar nature across Canada (Sharpe, 1992). At the time of the change, a number of significant changes took place within the program although the structure remained the same.

One of the most apparent changes to the program was the admission of TYP students to other Faculties. Until this time, successful participants were only admitted into the Arts Faculty.

Prior to commencement of the 1989/90 academic year, the Director of Native Student Services presented a draft proposal to admit TYP students to a number of Faculties on campus. Although, representatives had numerous questions about the program and the ability of the students, the Director was successful in gaining entry into the Science, Engineering, Agriculture and Forestry and Nursing[37] Faculties for TYP students. The Education Faculty began its access program in 1992 (Boehm, 1992).

Another change to the program was the number of admissions. The 1989/90 academic year saw a jump in the number of participants enrolled in the program when the enrollment increased to 31 from 5 the previous year. Traditionally, the coordinator took in a limited number of students because of limited funds and personnel. Although the program had not received additional operating funds the coordinator stated "that the program had no hope of gaining recognition or base funding from the University unless there was a substantial number of students" (Sharpe, 1992). She felt that the program needed 35 Transition Year students for the University to look at base funding the program. She said that if the program were to survive, a significant number of students would have to succeed in the program. With a limited enrollment that goal could not be achieved. She stated that:

> If you begin with 16 students and have 25% drop out rate, that leaves you with very few students. A 75% completion rate only leaves you with 12 students. Twelve students is not enough to ensure the continuation of a program.

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[37] The University of Alberta has the highest number of native nursing students in Canada.

> After all, how do you measure success at a University? You measure it in numbers.
> (Sharpe, 1992)

The program wanted to attract younger, more academically prepared students. To achieve this goal, the age limit for admission to the program was lowered to 18 from 24. This enabled aboriginal students to enroll in the program directly after graduating from Grade 12.

The program was streamlined during the 1989/90 year. There had been problematic situations between student funding agencies and the Transition Year Program. Funding agencies set a June 15 deadline for students attending school in September but the Transition Year Program coordinator did not complete the selection process until August. Students could be left without funding. This situation was eliminated by a series of letters to notify funding agencies about the status of its students.

The interview process was streamlined with a detailed interview format which consisted of a formal application, a number of skills assessment tests, a standardized applicant assessment form and a student contract. (see Appendix D) The student was scrutinized before he/she entered the program in hopes that only the most qualified and most motivated students would gain admission. In increasing the admission criteria, the Transition Year Program coordinator hoped to lower the attrition rate.

One important addition to the Transition Year Program was the Native Adult Summer University (NASU) which began in 1989. Since its beginning, it has been heavily populated by Transition Year Students. TYP students attended the program to familiarize themselves with the university campus and its system of operation. In 1990, the program became mandatory for TYP students beginning studies in September.

The one week orientation program was designed to give Aboriginals, and in particular Transition Year Students, a glimpse of university life. The goal of the program was to reduce the effect of actual or perceived barriers which stopped Aboriginals from pursuing a post secondary education. The hope was that students would enjoy their experience on campus and that some of their fears would be set to rest.

In this highly structured program, potential students are given lectures from staff in a variety of Faculties. This situation gives them an idea of the calibre of university teaching. Information sessions are given by funding agencies to show the participants the options they may have to finance their education. Campus tours, library orientation seminars and information on the mechanics of the University system give NASU students some substantive knowledge to help them ease into campus life should they decide to attend.

Native Adult Summer University allows students to meet each other on a less formal basis. Students can begin to build their support networks before they begin classes with the larger university population.

Native Student Services still charged students for tutorials and other overhead expenses incurred by Native Student Services. Costs are worked out on a per student basis and paid in addition to their regular tuition fees which are paid to the Registrar's Office.

The Transition Year Program coordinator's position was base funded by the university during the 1989/90 academic year. Although the coordinator's position was funded, the Office of Native Student Services lost its' Community Liaison position. Essentially, the Office of Native Student Services did not gain in the transaction. They are still working with the same number of staff members, so the change simply reflects a change in strategies for promotion of access. However, the 1988/89 TYP coordinator feels the program became a "bona fide program" through base funding and recognition by other Faculties, both of which were achieved in 1990.

Chapter 3

Data Analysis

This chapter contains a quantitative analysis of data obtained from the University of Alberta Registrar's Office. Student records were obtained for research purposes to determine the various measures of success of the students participating in the Transition Year Program.

When the records were received from the Registrar's office names were immediately transferred to annual lists of CUT/CUTP/TYP participants. These lists were then compared to class lists received from Native Student Services. Native Student Services retained class lists for some of the early years of the program but their records were not comprehensive. To complete these lists, the researcher also contacted former program administrators and former students to ask them to recall who was in the program in a given year.
As a result, the researcher was able to return to the Registrar's office and request records for specific students who had been omitted from the initial data.[38]

When the data was as complete as possible, it was coded and transferred to a data base. A variety of data fields were employed to isolate data points. The factors used in this analysis were program admission, program completion, withdrawals, faculty admission, and grade point average. The data documents the students' progress only during their year in the Transition Year Program.

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[38] The researcher as indicated in the first chapter is a member of the Aboriginal student community on campus. As this description of completing the list of students who were in the program suggests, it would have been difficult to develop a comprehensive list without extensive personal contact with the Aboriginal student body.

Table 1 indicates the number of students admitted to the Transition Year Program during the 7 years included in this study. The figure of 165 students shows the number of new students admitted to the program. Although there were more than 165 participants in the program over the years, some students were admitted into the program more than once. In such cases, the student would be counted only the first time he or she was admitted.

Table 1: Program Admissions

Year	Students Admitted
1985/86	14
1986/87	11
1987/88	20
1988/89	5
1989/90	31
1990/91	30
1991/92	54
Total	165

During the 1985 - 1988 academic years, the program admission numbers remained relatively small. There were a number of reasons for this, including a lack of qualified students to enter the program. Perhaps the most significant factor impeding the growth of the Transition Year Program was a lack of base funding. As stated in the last chapter, the program has been in jeopardy every year since it began due a lack of funding.

In the 1989 - 90 academic year there was a significant jump in admissions (from 5 in 1988-89 to 31). The TYP coordinator, Natalie Sharpe, decided that if the program were to survive and become a viable program on the University of Alberta campus, it needed more participants. She felt the program would be eliminated because the admission levels were low. The low admission levels resulted in few participants completing the program, being admitted to a Faculty and ultimately graduating with a degree.

If the program were to be recognized by the Faculties and University administration, student numbers would have to increase. The coordinator decided that the move to increase admissions would either kill the program or give it a much needed boost.

Table 2 shows the year and gender of the students admitted into the Transition Year Program.

There is a surprising equality in the gender of the participants. There is only a spread of 2 percentage points separating male and female admissions. It is difficult to determine whether the program administrators chose to employ gender parity or whether it was merely coincidental.

Table 2: Admission by Gender

Year	Male	Female	Total
85/86	10	4	14
86/87	7	4	11
87/88	11	9	20
88/89	3	2	5
89/90	14	17	31
90/91	12	18	30
91/92	28	26	54
Total	85	80	165
Percent	51	49	100

Table 3 shows the number of students who completed the program. The percentages of those who completed the program and those who did not complete are also included.

The "complete" category includes students who have completed the program and continued into a Faculty or repeated the Transition Year Program. The "non-Complete" category refers to those who have either voluntarily withdrawn from the program or those who have been required to withdraw from the program after the first term of study by the University administration.

Table 3: Admission by Completion by Percentage

Year	Admit	Complete	%	Withdrawals	%
1985/86	14	9	64	5	36
1986/87	11	4	36	7	64
1987/88	20	18	90	2	10
1988/89	5	4	80	1	20
1989/90	31	25	81	6	19
1990/91	30	24	80	6	20
1991/92	54	50	92	4	8
Total	**165**	**134**	**80**	**31**	**20**

The program has an overall completion rate of 80 percent. The completion rates during the first 2 years of the program were lower than subsequent years. The second year, 1986/87, it was particularly low with a completion rate of 36%. The program administration attributed this situation to lax admission requirements and participants who were academically unprepared for the calibre of work required at the University of Alberta.

In 1987 - 88 the completion rate rose to 90 percent. During the subsequent years the completion rate ranges from 80 to 92 percent with an average of 85 percent. The increased completion rate can verify the effectiveness of the more stringent admission criteria set in place for program applicants. Students were not allowed into the program unless they had a minimum academic standard.

Tables 4 and 5 examine the program completion rates by year and gender. Table 4 shows that the overall completion rate for males is 76 percent. The admissions in 1991/92 (28) nearly tripled the admissions in 85/86 (10) while the completion rate in the latter year was 30 percent higher. This can indicate that students are better prepared to deal with university study.

Table 4: Admission by Completion - Male

Year	Admit	Complete	% Complete
85/86	10	6	60
86/87	7	2	28
87/88	11	10	91
88/89	3	3	100
89/90	14	11	78
90/91	12	9	75
91/92	28	24	86
Total	**85**	**65**	**76**

Males have a wide range of program completion; 28 percent in 1986/87 to 100 percent in 1988/89. Although there is a substantial difference in percentage rates of completion (72%), this only constitutes a difference of one nominal value. In 1986/87, two people completed the program; while in 1988/89, three completed (i.e. the rate reflects differences in the number of students admitted into the program rather than the number who completed).

Table 5 shows that females had a higher completion rate than males. The overall completion rate for females was 86 percent. This is 10 percent higher than the completion rate for males.

Table 5: Admission by Completion - Female

Year	Admit	Complete	% Complete
85/86	4	3	75
86/87	4	2	50
87/88	9	8	89
88/89	2	1	50
89/90	17	14	82
90/91	18	15	83
91/92	26	26	100
Total	**80**	**69**	**86**

Female program completion ranged from a low of 50 percent in 1986/87 and 1988/89 to a high of 100 percent in 1991/92.

There was a range of 72% in the completion rate from the lower than the higher year for male participants while females had a range of 50%. More women completed the program than men although more men were admitted.

Table 6 looks at the number of participants who completed the program and who continued or did not continue their studies. Students in the "Continue" category include those who were admitted to faculties or those who repeated the Transition Year Program the following year. Students in the "Non-continue" category are those who have completed the program but may have chosen not to continued their education at the University of Alberta. Students in this category may have continued at another institution, or simply chosen not to continue, or may have been required to withdraw by the University administration. Students are required to withdraw if they have failed a course or if their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is less than 4.5.

Table 6: Program Completion by Continue

Year	Complete	Continue	%	Non Continue	%
1985/86	9	7	78	2	22
1986/87	4	0	0	4	100
1987/88	18	10	56	8	44
1988/89	4	2	50	2	50
1989/90	25	16	64	9	36
1990/91	24	12	50	12	50
1991/92	50	23	46	27	54
Total	134	70	52	64	48

It seems ironic that the first year of the program, 1985-86, would have the highest continuation rate of 78 percent while the next year has the lowest rate with nobody continuing. Overall, of the students who complete the program, 51 percent continue. However, unlike the completion rate which is higher overall after year two, the continuation rate fluctuates from the first to the last year of the program.

Table 7 looks at continuation rates based on gender. The male continuation rate drops below 50 percent. Only 30 of the 65 males who completed the program continue their studies at the University of Alberta the following year.

Table 7: Program Completion by Gender by Continuation - Male

Year	Admitted	Complete	Continue	%	Non Continue	%
85/86	10	6	4	67	2	33
86/87	7	2	0	0	2	100
87/88	11	10	6	60	4	40
88/89	3	3	1	33	2	67
89/90	14	10	7	64	4	36
90/91	12	9	2	22	7	88
91/92	28	24	10	42	14	58
Total	85	65	30	46	35	54

The first year of the program has the highest continuation rate at 67 percent whereas in the following year no student continued studies. Consequently, no males continued their studies.

Table 8 shows that the overall female continuation rate is 56 percent. Thirty nine of the 69 females who completed the program continued their studies at the University of Alberta the following year.

Table 8: Program Completion by Continuation - Female

Year	Admitted	Complete	Continue	%	Non Continue	%
85/86	4	3	3	100	0	0
86/87	4	2	0	0	2	100
87/88	9	8	4	50	4	50
88/89	2	1	1	100	1	0
89/90	17	14	9	64	5	36
90/91	18	15	9	60	6	40
91/92	26	26	13	50	13	50
Total	80	69	39	56	30	44

Table 9 details student withdrawal or non-completion during the Transition Year. Students can either withdraw from their program voluntarily or they can be asked to withdraw by the University administration.

During the 7 years included in this study 68 students have withdrawn from the program. This constitutes 41 percent of the total number of students admitted to the program. These withdrawals can occur in either term. Voluntary withdrawals must occur prior to the day the University sets as its last day to withdraw from classes. Failure to withdraw prior to that date can constitute a failing grade on the student's record.

Table 9: Program and Institution Withdrawals

Year	Student Withdrawals	Voluntary Withdrawals	Requested by University
1985/86	5	1	4
1986/87	9	5	4
1987/88	9	3	6
1988/89	2	2	0
1989/90	12	4	8
1990/91	11	4	7
1991/92	20	5	15
Total	68	24	44

Sixty five percent or 44 of the student withdrawals were requested by the University administration. The requested withdrawals can occur after the first term. In this situation, the student is required to voluntarily withdraw from his second term courses.

A student may be required to withdraw after completing the program. The student is not able to continue his studies for 3 years after being required to withdraw from the University.

Table 10 examines voluntary withdrawals by term. Students who withdraw voluntarily from their program must do so 3 weeks prior to the term completion. For 1/2 FCE courses (half year), the withdrawal date is the middle of November for Term 1 and the middle of March for Term 2. If a student wishes to voluntarily withdraw from a 1 FCE course (full year), the withdrawal date is the second week in January.

Table 10: Voluntary Withdrawals by Term

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Voluntary Withdrawals
85/86	1	0	1
86/87	5	0	5
87/88	1	2	3
88/89	2	0	2
89/90	2	2	4
90/91	4	0	4
91/92	3	2	5
Total	18	6	24

There were 24 voluntary withdrawals during the 7 years included in this study. Sixty seven percent of the voluntary withdrawals took place during the first term. These students may have decided that they were not interested in pursuing a post secondary education at this institution. However, according to the program administration, family problems account for many of the voluntary withdrawals.

Table 11 looks at requested withdrawals. There were 44 requested withdrawals during the 7 years included in this study. Twenty seven percent of the total number of students admitted into the Transition Year Program (165) were required to withdraw from university study.

Table 11: Requested Withdrawals by Term Completion

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Requested Withdrawals
85/86	1	3	4
86/87	2	2	4
87/88	0	6	6
88/89	0	0	0
89/90	1	7	8
90/91	2	5	7
91/92	1	14	15
Total	7	37	44

The majority of the requested withdrawals, 37 of 44, were made after completion of the second term. A student required to withdraw at this time would not be allowed to continue studies at the University of Alberta for a three period. Required withdrawals are precipitated by an Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of less than 4.5 or a failure in either a full year course or a second term course.

Table 12 summarizes preceding tables on program continuation and withdrawals of Transition Year students by progress at the end of each year. The "Continuing Students" category includes students who have either been admitted to a Faculty or will repeat the Transition Year Program the following year. Voluntary withdrawals includes students who have voluntarily withdrawn from study during either the first or second term. Required withdrawals refers to students who have been required to withdraw for study by the University administration after the completion of either the first or second term. Non-Continuing students includes students who have successfully completed the Transition Year Program but have decided not to continue their education at this institution or at this time. These student may choose to enroll in another post secondary institution.

Table 12: Summary; Program Continuation and Withdrawals

Year	n	Continuing Student	Voluntary Withdrawal	Required Withdrawal	Non Continuing Students
85/86	14	7	1	4	2
86/87	11	0	5	4	2
87/88	20	10	3	6	1
88/89	5	2	2	0	1
89/90	31	16	4	8	3
90/91	30	12	4	7	7
91/92	54	23	5	15	11
Total	165	70	24	44	27
Percent	100	43	14	27	16

The percent figures in the last row of this table provides a succinct analysis of the outcome of students enrolled in the Transition Year Program for the 7 years under study. Students who complete the Transition Year program and continue their education at the university in either a Faculty or in the Transition Year Program constitute 43 percent of all students admitted into the program. Students who voluntarily withdraw from the program constitute 14 percent of the total. Students required to withdraw from the program by the University administration make up 27 percent of the students admitted. Students who complete the program but do not continue their education at this university constitute 16 percent of all students admitted to the program. Students who voluntarily withdraw (24) or are required to withdraw by the university administration (44) almost equals the number of students who have continued their education (70).

While 43 percent of the student admitted into the program continue their education at this university; 57 percent do not. The 57 percent either withdraw themselves, are required to withdraw, or chose not to continue.

Table 13 details the paths of students who completed the Transition Year Program and continue their studies at the University of Alberta the following year.

Table 13: Continuing Students: Program Repeaters and Faculty Admissions

Year	Continuing Students	Program Repeat	%	Faculty Admissions	%
85/86	7	0	0	7	100
86/87	0	0	0	0	0
87/88	10	2	30	8	80
88/89	2	0	0	2	100
89/90	16	7	44	9	56
90/91	12	0	27	12	100
91/92	23	0	0	23	100
Total	70	9	11	61	89

Seventy students completed the Transition Year Program and continued at the University of Alberta. Of the 70 students who continued, 9 or 13 percent of the students repeated the Transition Year Program. One explanation for repeating is that a student may not have had a high enough Grade Point Average (GPA) to gain admission to a Faculty. For example, the Arts Faculty has a minimum admission Grade Point Average (GPA) of 5.5 on a 9 point stanine system; while the Science Faculty's minimum admission GPA is 5.0. However, the continuing student could not have failed any courses during the previous year in the Transition Year Program for they would not then be permitted to continue.

The Transition Year Coordinator decides whether a student can repeat the program. This decision may be based on the student's dedication to post secondary education and the number of students eligible for the program the following year. If there are few qualified applicants then the coordinator may allow a student to repeat. But, according to University regulations, a student may enrol as an Unclassified Student and take a maximum of 10 half courses without being admitted to a Faculty. A student has this option open even if he or she is not permitted to repeat the Transition Year Program.

The Faculties admitted 61 students after they completed the Transition Year Program. This constitutes 87 percent of continuing students; 45 percent of students who completed the program; and 37 percent of all students admitted into the program.

Table 14 shows the Faculties who admitted Transition Year students after they completed the program.

Table 14: Faculty Admission by Year

Year	n	Arts	Sc	SNS	Nurs	Educ	Com
85/86	7	7					
86/87	0						
87/88	8	7	1				
88/89	2	2					
89/90	9	2	1	6			
90/91	12	3		9			
91/92	23	3	2	8	1	6	3
Total	61	24	4	23	1	6	3

The Arts Faculty was the first Faculty to admit Transition Year students. The admitted students had the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 5.5 of the 9 point stanine required for admission.

With the exception of 1 student admitted into the Science Faculty, the Arts Faculty was the only one to admit Transition Year students for the first 4 years of the program; 1985/86 to 1988/89.

Since its initiation, the Arts Faculty and the School of Native Studies have admitted the highest number of Transition Year Students. The Arts Faculty admitted 24 former Transition Year students; while the School of Native Studies admitted 23.

In 1989/90 the School of Native Studies admitted its first Transition Year Students. Of the 9 students admitted to the School of Native Studies, 5 were admitted on a probationary status.

The 1991/92 academic year saw an expansion in the number of Faculties who would admit Transition Year students when they completed the program. The Education, Business and Nursing Faculties began to admit students.

Table 15 shows the students who have been admitted into various Faculties and the number of students admitted on a probationary basis.

Table 15: Admission and Probationary Faculty Admission by Year

Year	n	Arts	Sc	SNS	Nurs	Educ	Bus
85/86	7	7(1)					
86/87	0						
87/88	8	7	1				
88/89	2	2(1)					
89/90	9	2	1(1)	6(5)			
90/91	12	3		9(5)			
91/92	23	3(1)	2	8(1)	1	6	3
Total	61	24(3)	4(1)	23(11)	1	6	3

() denotes probationary admission status

Students are usually admitted on a probationary basis if they have met, but barely met, the minimum Faculty admission criteria. The Arts Faculty, the Science Faculty and the School of Native Studies have all admitted probationary students. However, the number of probationary students admitted to the School of Native Studies is much higher than the other two Faculties which admitted probationary students. When questioned about this situation, a representative from the School of Native studies replied that they admit students on a probationary basis who have not met the minimum admission Grade Point Average.

Table 16 Faculty Admissions by Retention and Graduation

Year	Faculty Admissions	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93
85/86	7	7	7	6(1)	3(1)	3(1)	3	2
86/87	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
87/88	8			8	7	3	2	2
88/89	2				2	2	1	1
89/90	9					9	6	5
90/91	12						12	11
91/92	23							20*
Total	61	7	7	14	12	17	24	41

() numbers in parentheses refers to student who graduated that year.
* denotes admission in September not completion in April.

Table 16 shows the number of students retained in the university and the numbers who graduated, once admitted to Faculties. During the 1986/87 academic year, 7 former Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) students were admitted into the Arts Faculty. All students remained in the Faculty for the next two academic years. Enrollment in the 1988/89 and 1989/90 shows one less student each year due to graduation, but the 1989/90 year which shows only 3 students indicates that two have discontinued without graduating. In the following year, the number enrolled in the university remains at 3 despite the graduation of one student in the previous year because a student who had previously dropped out, returned to study. In addition, one graduate had returned for graduate studies. In summary, of the 7 who continued, 3 obtained a degree, 2 are continuing and two withdrew from the University of Alberta. Of the three with degrees, one is now in graduate school.

The 1986/87 Coordinated University Transfer class had nobody continue their studies.

During the 1988/89 academic year, the 8 continuing students represent former Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) students admitted into the Arts Faculty and 1 admitted into the Science Faculty. By the next year, 1 student had discontinued and by the 1990/91 academic year, 4 students . One additional student discontinued studies by the 1991/92 academic year. There are currently 2 students from the 1987/88 Coordinated University Transfer program attending classes in their fifth year of study at the University of Alberta.

During the 1989/90 academic year, 2 former Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) students were admitted into the Arts Faculty. In the 1991/92 academic year, 1 student discontinued. The remaining student in currently in her fourth year of study at the University of Alberta in 1990/91.

Upon completion of the Transition Year Program (TYP) in 1989-90, 9 students were admitted into Faculties at the University of

Alberta. After 1 year of study, this number dropped to 6 and the following year 1 additional student withdrew. There are currently 5 TYP students studying at the University of Alberta in their third year as Faculty students.

The TYP students admitted into Faculties in 1991/92 totaled 12. After 1 year of study, this number has dropped to 11. These students are in their second year of study at Faculties at the University of Alberta.

The number of students who completed their first year of Faculty studies was limited at the time this analysis was performed. Of the twenty three students who were admitted into Faculties for the 1992/93 academic year, three withdrew before the end of the academic year.

Table 16 indicates that there are 41 former Coordinated University Transfer, Coordinated University Transfer Program and Transition Year students currently pursuing study in Faculties at the University of Alberta. Of these students: 1 is in Graduate Studies, 1 is in his/her seventh year of study and is expected to graduate in Spring, 1993; 2 are in their fifth year of study; 1 is in his/her fourth year of study; 5 are in their third year of study; 11 are in their second year of study and 21 are completing their first year of study. There have been three students graduate with a Bachelors degree. Forty-one of the 61 students or 67% who entered Faculties at the University of Alberta are still pursuing a degree. Twenty of the 61 students admitted to Faculties or 33% discontinued their studies without completing degrees at this university.

Table 17 shows Faculty Admissions by Year and numbers retained. This table displays which year of study in a Faculty the students decides not to continue.

Table 17 Faculty Drop Outs by Year of Admission and Year of Study

Year	Faculty Admissions	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7
85/86	7	0	0	1	3	0	0	1
86/87	0	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	
87/88	8	0	1	4	1	0		
88/89	2	0	0	1	0			
89/90	9	0	3	1				
90/91	12	0	1					
91/92	23	3						
Total	61	3	5	7	4	0	0	1

Table 17 indicates that 21 of the 61 students who began Faculty studies discontinued. This number constitutes 33% of the former CUT, CUTP, and TYP who gained entry into the Faculties. The current academic year, 1992/93, was the only year in which first year Faculty students dropped out. Prior this this year, the students began to drop out during their second year of Faculty study. This would be their third year of post secondary study since they spend one year in the Transition Year Program. The number of students who discontinue their studies increases during their third year of Faculty study (fourth year on campus). This number then decreases in their fourth year of Faculty study.

These totals should, however, be interpreted cautiously, for the majority of the 61 students have not been in the university for over two years so trends or patterns are not yet clear. There does seem to be a "year" in which a number of students withdraw in each cohort: year 4 for the 85/86 group; year 3 for the 87/88 group; and year 2 for the 89/90 group. It is possible that in some situation increases the likelihood of other students withdrawing if one of their friends/acquaintances withdraw.

There can be a number of explanations for students discontinuing their studies. As Aboriginal students with some post secondary experience, they are actively, and sometimes aggressively, recruited by a variety of governmental and private agencies who need to fulfill their affirmative action quotas. Since many students enter post secondary institutions with the intention of acquiring a well-paying and secure job, these agents make them offers that are hard to refuse. They are given a short cut to their long term goals; many accept.

Another reason some students may discontinue their studies is financial. Many have accumulated debts through student loans and leave school to work to lessen that debt.

Table 18 shows the number of Transition Year participants admitted the Faculties who have either a Grade 12 standing or prior post secondary education.

Table 18: Faculty Admission by Grade 12 and Prior Post Secondary

Year	Faculty Admission	Grade 12	Prior Post Secondary
85/86	7	0	5
86/87	0	0	0
87/88	8	1	5
88/89	2	1	0
89/90	9	1	3
90/91	12	2	3
91/92	23	8	3
Total	61	13	19

The number of TYP students admitted into a Faculty who have either a Grade 12 standing or prior post secondary education equals 32 or 52 percent of the total. Thirteen, or 21 percent, of the students admitted into a Faculty had achieved Grade 12 standing. Nineteen students or 31 percent admitted into a Faculty had prior post secondary education.

The number of students who entered the TYP with either Grade 12 or prior post secondary education may have actually been higher but this information is only indicated on the student's record when they are admitted to a Faculty.

Table 19 shows the post secondary institutions attended by students admitted into a Faculty.

Table 19: Post Secondary Institutions Previously Attended

Institution	Students
Athabasca University	8
Grande Prairie Regional College	4
Concordia College	2
Grant MacEwan Community College	1
Blue Quills First Nations College	1
Langara College	1
University of Calgary	1
University of Lethbridge	1

As can be seen from this table, students attended a variety of post secondary institutions. Athabasca University was the institution attended by the most students. Athabasca University, an open university which conducts post secondary courses through correspondence and in a variety of locations in northern Alberta, was perhaps the most easily accessible to the students, but it also collaborated with the University of Alberta in the first years of the program, heavily influencing these numbers.

The majority of the students who had prior post secondary education (16 of 19) attended post secondary institutions in northern Alberta. The University of Alberta campus is the closest to their community of origin.

Table 20 examines the Grade Point Averages (GPAs) of students who completed the Transition Year Program and then continued in a Faculty at the University of Alberta. Students who voluntarily withdrew from the program did not have a GPA listed on their record.

Table 20: Program Completion GPA and Continuing Student GPA

Year	Completing Students	Completing Student GPA	Continuing Student GPA
85/86	9	5.1	5.2
86/87	4	4.0	6.0
87/88	18	4.1	5.4
88/89	4	4.4	4.6
89/90	25	4.2	5.3
90/91	24	4.7	5.2
91/92	50	4.5	5.6
Total	134	4.4	5.3

The average GPA for the 134 students who completed the Transition Year Program was 4.4 of a 9 point stanine. The highest GPA was recorded in the first year of the program was 5.1. This may be explained by the fact that 5 of the 9 students who completed the program had prior post secondary education. The overall GPA for the 91-92 year was relatively high considering there were 50 students. The academic performance of Native students is roughly that of the university student population at large (University of Alberta, 1984:26).

The GPAs for the continuing students were considerably higher than the overall class GPA of those who completed. That is partly explained by the fact that this group excludes students who completed the program, but were required to withdraw after completion of the second term because they did not meet the minimum 4.5 GPA standard set by the Unclassified Student Office.

The data in this chapter details a variety of quantitative measures: how many people were admitted into the program; how many completed; how many were admitted into Faculties; the retention rate for Faculty students; and the GPAs of continuing students. These measures do not take into account a number of personal issues described by program participants. These issues will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Participant Experiences

The respondents whose interviews are detailed in this chapter are former participants of the Transition Year Program and its predecessors, the Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) and the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP). These students relayed their own personal experiences in the program and are not meant to be viewed as representative of that particular year.

Respondents in this study were selected using a number of data collection techniques. The first attempt to attract respondents was made through advertising the study on posters which were placed on campus at the Aboriginal Student Council lounge, Native Student Services and the School of Native Studies. After the initial respondents had contacted the researcher, it was decided that to get a good description of the evolution of the program a yearly reporting of the program should be attempted. It was decided that program participants from each of the years could provided the information to accomplish this task by relaying their personal experiences.

When the interviews were completed with the initial respondents, the researcher discovered that there were a number of years not represented by the data collected. At that time, the researcher began to ask former CUT, CUTP and TYP students for names of people were in the program either before or after them who they thought might be interested in participating in this study. A list of names of former students was obtained from various students. This list contained students who had completed and not completed the program. The researcher attempted to involve more students who had not completed the program but after numerous broken appointments and unreturned telephone calls, the decision was made not to include these people in the sample if they did not wish to be interviewed. When most of the interviews were completed and there were still a few years not represented. The researcher then selected former TYP students that she was acquainted with and asked them if they would be interested in participation. A number of contracts were made because in some cases long periods of time had elapsed and the person could not remember events in enough detail to make an interview worthwhile for the researcher.

Generally, respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate in the project and their ability to recall particulars of the program and of their experience in the program and on the University of Alberta campus.

Although, the TYP has been in operation for 9 years this study spans a 7 year period; the 1985/86 to 1991/92 academic years. Nine interviews were conducted with program participants; two from each of the first (1985/86) and last year (1991/92) years. The remainder of the interviews were with participants from the years between 1986/87 and 199/91.[39]

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[39] The researcher was only able to study completed programs, so 1992/93 could not be included. The first year of the program, 1984/85, was not sufficiently documented to enable the researcher to gather data.

The interviewees were asked to retrace the activities which caused them to become involved in the TYP. They were also asked to give accounts of their experiences, both academic and personal, during the program and their activities since completion.

The respondents were asked to make recommendations[40] to improve the program. The program's structure has changed greatly since its inceptions and as a result, many of the suggestions given by the early participants have already been incorporated into the program in later years.

All respondents provided a candid view of their experiences with the program and the U of A campus. As with any study, there are always questions that go unanswered. The success of the program is determined by the number of students who successfully complete the program and go on to obtain a degree. One can only speculate as to how the experiences of the participants involved in this study could have been altered if the University administration had financially supported this program from the onset. Could additional support staff and resources have helped retain some of the students who did not complete the program?

Since this program was designed specifically for Aboriginals, a group already marginalized in Canadian society, did the University Administration and University population marginalize them even more by not supporting the program? Did students experience racism on Campus? These and many other questions are relevant to the experience of the CUT, CUTP and TYP students. Factors extraneous to the actual activity at hand, gaining a post secondary education, may have played a large part in the success or failure of the students.

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[40] This analysis is designed to profile the experiences and recommendations of former TYP participants. For this reason the writer will not make recommendations to the program.

As with all Transition Year Program participants described in the previous chapter, respondents came from a variety of educational backgrounds, with some having been more prepared for post secondary study than others. Some had prior post secondary experience while others had not completed high school.

For example, the world experiences of the participant also varied greatly. One respondent grew up in Vancouver away from his Reserve and his extended family while another had never lived outside her Reserve community.

Table 21 profiles the interviewees participating in this analysis. The explanation of the column categories is as follows. All interviews were conducted between October, 1992 and January,1993. The year denotes when they participated in the program. Age denotes their age at the time they participated in the program Marital Status refers to their status while in the program. Children refers to the number of children they had while in the program. Present situation refers to what the participant was doing at the time of the interview.

Table 21: Interviewee Profiles

Date	Year	Age	Male/ Female	Single/ Married	Children	Complete Program	Present Situation
Oct 17	91/92	25	Female	Single	No	Yes	C/S
Oct 19	88/89	22	Male	Single	No	Yes	C/S
Oct 21	87/88	42	Male	Married	5	Yes	Employed
Nov 3	85/86	25	Male	Single	No	Yes	Employed*
Nov 12	85/86	27	Female	Married	1	Yes	Employed*
Dec 1	90/91	23	Female	Single	No	Yes	C/S
Dec 1	91/92	40	Female	Married	3	Yes	C/S
Jan 3	89/90	26	Male	Single	No	Yes	Employed
Jan 26	86/87	24	Male	Married	1	No	Employed

Present Situation: C/S denotes a continuing student on the U of A campus
* denotes a U of A degree graduate

The following is the analysis of the interviews. The interview transcripts are attached in Appendix A.

The interviewees were diverse and the varying levels of academic preparation and student variety in life experiences is well exemplified in the interviews. The interviewees ranged in age from 22 to 42. The gender and marital status were relatively equal with 5 males and 4 females; 4 married and 5 single. All of the married interviewees had parental responsibilities.

Of the 9 people interviewed, 6 had graduated from Grade 12; two of the remaining three had some Grade 12 courses and one had achieved Grade 11 standing. A number of the participants had post secondary experience prior to attending the Transition Year Program; one had attended the University of Calgary, one had attended a community college in British Columbia, one had a journeyman tradesman certificate from a technical school and one had a secretarial diploma.

All but one of the nine interviewees completed the program. Of the 9 interviewees, 5 were employed and 4 were continuing students. The employed students agreed that their TYP experience helped them obtained their present employment.

Interviewees learned of the program from a number of sources. During the first years of program operations, the Coordinated University Transfer Program and Native Student Services were featured in an Alberta Multi-Media Society of Alberta (AMMSA) article.[41] Native Student Services advertised the program in Native newspapers to increase interest in the program. Brochures ands other printed material were sent to Band offices and other post secondary institutions to "spread the word" about the program. (Laboucane, 1992) This procedure was continued because future TYP students learned of the program from these diverse sources.

"Word of mouth" is an effective means of dispersing information in the Aboriginal community. Many of the participants learned of the program from acquaintances within the Aboriginal community; one was urged to enter the program with a friend who was planning to attend and in fact they enrolled together; one was informed of the program by a friend who was attending the University of Alberta; one was told of the program by a friend who had attended the program the previous year and one was attending another educational institution and was told of the program by a fellow student

When the program began in 1985, the Director of Native Student Services, Dr. Carl Urion was well known in the Native Community and many interested people contacted him directly. One participant approached Dr. Urion about the program and stated that he was "very excited about the program and the philosophy put forth by Dr. Urion" (Interview #3, 1992).

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[41] AMMSA became the Windspeaker, a Native newspaper published in Edmonton which circulates in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Post secondary institutions referred two students to the TYP. One student was given information about the Transition Year Program by the coordinator of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia. Another student was referred to the Transition Year Program by a counsellor at Native Student Services at the University of Calgary.

Band education counsellors were made aware of the program by brochures and other printed material sent to their offices. They were also visited by the University of Alberta's community liaison representative, Doreen L'Hirondelle[42]. One interviewee learned about the CUT program through his Band's Education Counsellor. He stated that his counsellor and others in his community referred to the CUT program as the "back door to the University".[43]

The participants gave various reasons for wanting to enroll in a university program. Three participants cited job security as the reason for pursuing university study. One participant stated that in addition to job security she also wanted to wanted to obtain better writing and analytical skills (Interview #1,1992). She stated that she had been raised in an atmosphere in which education was held in high regard.[44] She stated that "I always knew I would go to University it just a matter of when, where and how I would get the money to go" (Interview #1, 1992). The financial constraints were removed when the respondent was granted C31 status. [45]

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[42] Doreen L'Hirondelle was the University of Alberta's Community Liaison Representative from 1986-1989. She travelled to schools in Edmonton and the surrounding area and Northern Alberta which has a high concentration of Aboriginal students. She informed students of admission criteria, services available on campus and information on the faculties, and gave potential students an overview of the Coordinated University Transfer Program.

[43] The "back door " reference is opposed to the "front door" where people who have the academic preparation and credentials to enter with regular admission.

Another student who stated that job security was the main reason he pursued a post secondary education stated that he had a personal issue to deal with in gaining an education. Interviewee #2 stated "I wanted to get a degree in something. I wanted to do something for myself. I wanted to go against the stereotypes of Indians"(Interview #2, 1992). He also felt that "you had to give up your Indian identity to be successful in the White Man's world" (Interview#2, 1992). Over the year he realized that this was not so.

Interviewee #8 stated that going to university was intriguing because he had not thought of it as an option for himself. He was the first person in his family who had attended university. When he was growing up in Northern Alberta, those in his immediate family and his acquaintances did not regard university or other post secondary institutions (except trade school) as options. He had been raised with the idea that "having a trade was the 'way to go'; a way of attaining job security and of making a 'good living' "[46] (Interview #8, 1993).

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[44] The interviewee was raised by a non-native relative

[45] In 1985 the Federal Government passed legislation, Bill C31, to reinstate Indian women and their descendents who lost their treaty status for a variety of reasons. The main reason for women to lose their Treaty Indian status was that they married a man without legal Indian status. This did not occur if an Indian man married a non-Indian women who did not hold Indian status.

[46] When Interviewee #8 learned of the TYP he was enrolled in an Alberta College Upgrading program preparing to enter the Paramedic program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.

Other participants stated that they entered university for a career change. Interviewee #7 stated that, although she worked in a bank as a customer service clerk for 16 years she was concerned about the automization of the banking industry (Interview #7, 1992). Interviewee #6 who also wanted a career change stated that she pursued a post secondary education because she was working as a secretary and viewed it as a "dead end" job with no chance for advancement (Interview #6, 1992).

Interviewee #3 stated that he entered the Coordinated University Transfer Program because he felt the CUTP would give him the skills he needed to succeed at university. He wanted to gain knowledge about the farming business since he had run a family farm for many years. He entered the CUTP with the intention of entering the Agriculture and Forestry Faculty upon completion of the CUTP (Interview# 3, 1992).

When asked why they enrolled in the Transition Year Program the participant's responses were similar. They wanted a program that would support them both academically and personally during their transition to post secondary study. Most felt they would benefit from the networking and supplemental tutorials encouraged by the Transition Year Program. Interviewee #9 stated that "the CUT program promised entry into the academic realm." He expected assistance in improving his writing and study skills (Interview #9, 1993). Another stated that he had attended Langara College and a Bible college in Vancouver. He dropped out of both of these institutions because he felt alienated. Because of the negative experiences in both of these institutions which he described as a "sink or swim situation", the respondent viewed the program as individually oriented and less threatening than the regular access route (Interview #2, 1992). He chose the CUTP because of its supplementary tutorials, study skills programs. and the individualized approach (Interview #2, 1992).

Interviewees were asked how they managed emotionally, financially and academically during their year in the TYP. The experiences of the program participants ranged from "a very positive experience" to "absolutely devastating".

Academically, most students were satisfied with their performance. They described the experience as "overwhelming at first" but manageable when they understood what was required of them. Some felt intimidated by the size of the classes and competition for marks among the students in their non-TYP classes.[47] However, Interviewee #5 stated that she found the work challenging and was not intimidated by competition. In fact, the competition caused her to work harder (Interview #5, 1992). Interviewee #8 stated that he had a difficult time focussing on school work. He said that there were "too many diversions vying for my time and attention". Unfortunately the diversions were extra curricular. This situation was remedied as the year progressed (Interview #8, 1993).

Interviewee #9 said that academically, he was frustrated, both with himself and with the system. He worked very hard and hoped with "all his heart" that he would grasp the concepts and succeed academically. He questioned his intellectual ability and wondered "if something was wrong with him because others seemed to 'get it'" (Interview #9, 1993). The respondent recalled an Anthropology professor who tried very hard to help the students complete a course. He sensed that the Professor was frustrated with the inability of the students to grasp basic concepts. "One day the professor looked at us and said 'You guys should know this stuff, its basic'; it may have been basic to him but to us, it was foreign with our different backgrounds, what was basic to him was not basic to me. It made me feel inadequate" (Interview #9, 1993).

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[47] In all years of the program, students took at least one regular university class, an unclassified course, with the general university population.

Financially, all students were under budgetary constraints. Two students held part-time jobs to supplement the living allowance they received from the Department of Indian Affairs.[48] Although many could have benefitted from the extra income from a part-time job they were not able to work because of school and family commitments.

A student who had moved from a reserve into Edmonton to attend the program said that she "barely made ends meet" and "there were no emergency funds". She depended on "rations" sent from home to help her survive in the city.[49] Another student who moved into Edmonton from a reserve stated that he had an "extremely difficult time financially", he added, "while living in Edmonton a person has to pay rent and worry about transportation; things you don't have to worry about on the reserve"(Interview #9, 1993).

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[48] The Department of Indian Affairs gave both of these single students a monthly living allowance of $675 during the academic year.

[49] Many native students depend on gifts of wild meat and fish sent to them by their relatives on the reserve.

Interviewee #8 stated that although he had a difficult time financially in the program he said that he was "used to being broke from the two years at Alberta College so being in the TYP was no different" (Interview #8, 1993).

Emotionally, the students coped very differently with the challenges presented to them. Most students felt they were "out of place" on the university campus either because of their age or their academic or cultural background. All students noted apprehension and feelings of self doubt at the onset, but most adjusted well to campus life. The emotional upheavals felt by the students were caused by both internal and external forces. The external forces were having to deal with the number of students on campus, the size of the university and the academic expectations of the program. Interviewee #5 described her first impressions of the University of Alberta campus as intimidating. "There were so many people; they were 'like ants on an ant hill'". It was frightening for a person from a small community." She doubted whether she had made the right decision by enrolling in the program because she had left her extended family and a secure job on the reserve (Interview #5, 1992).

Interviewee #7 stated that she was worried in the beginning because she had been out of school for a long time and she felt she had a "rusty brain". She also felt "out of place" on campus because the students were all so young (Interview #7, 1992).

The internal forces were the insecurity of starting something new, the fear of failure and , for some students, having to come to terms with their own identity as an Indian. Interviewee #2 stated that he was worried in the beginning because he had been at other post secondary institutions and not liked them. He hoped that this experience would have been difference because he wanted to get good marks and prove to himself that he belonged on campus (Interview #2,1992).

Three of the nine people interviewed stated that they came to terms with their Indian heritage while in the Transition Year Program. Interviewee #2 stated that he was apprehensive about being in a program with Indians. Growing up he had been inundated with the negative "Indian" stereotypes. As a result, he distanced himself from his native ancestry. He had only met one Indian person who had gone to university when he was growing up and he described him as "obnoxious and boastful". His negative perception of Indians changed when he began the program. He met many Native people from different parts of Canada through the program. Each person had a variety of experiences. It was wonderful to be in a situation with intelligent, motivated Indian people. He began to take pride in his culture rather than be ashamed of it (Interview #2, 1992).

A similar situation occurred with Interviewee #1. She described herself as being "in a state of constant emotional turmoil" and "in a period of self discovery" during the TYP. Although she grew up near an Indian reserve she did not know any Native people. She was raised by a non-Native relative who was worried that she and her brothers would get into trouble if they associated with Indians. As a result she lived a sheltered life and did not learn her culture. When she began TYP, she began to identify her as a Native person and Native issues became personal issues for her. She described this process as emotionally draining. "The strength and understanding of other Native students on campus gave me the ability to deal with my issues in a supportive environment" (Interview #1, 1992).

Interviewee #8 stated that he was happy to be in a program with other Indian students. Prior to entering the program he "acknowledged his Indian heritage but was not 'proud of it'". The opportunity to associate with intelligent, motivated Indian students helped "solidify" his Indian identity (Interview #8, 1993).

The experiences the participants recalled from the program were both positive and negative. The students who had a positive experiences in the program cited the TYP coordinator, supplemental tutorials, smaller classes and peer support as the reason they enjoyed their time in the program. One participant stated:

> It was easier to get motivated because of the smaller group and everybody helped each other. There was cooperation and little or no competition between the students. I felt secure and accepted in the CUTP environment. It was nice to have the "reserve feeling brought to campus"(Interview #2, 1992).

Another student described his experience in the program as enjoyable because it placed a "human face on a large, potentially alienating, campus. A person did not feel as 'disconnected'" (Interview #8, 1993).

A student in the first year of the program stated that he felt really frustrated with himself and the system but said "it helped build character". The screening process was inadequate. It was difficult to see your fellow students drop out. "You got to know them really well because you were with them all the time. You knew they were able to do the work but some would not or could not commit the time needed to succeed" (Interview #4, 1992). He said that students expected University to be an extension of high school but it was very different. At times we felt like "a sitting duck just waiting to be 'picked off' by the system" (Interview #4, 1992). The University was impersonal. "If it was not for the Aboriginal Student lounge I would not have known any other students (besides my CUT colleagues)" (Interview #4, 1992).

He felt isolated as an aboriginal on campus and as a CUT student did not feel a part of the university population.

> We, CUT students, kept the illusion alive that we were part of the University but we were unclassified students in a classified institution. I did a lot of covering up. I didn't tell people I was part of the CUT program. You tried to think that you were like anyone else but down deep you knew that if you screwed up once you were gone (Interview #4,1992).

Not all participants had a positive experience in the program. One participant stated that she did not find the Transition Year Program to be beneficial. She stated, "if I knew then what I know now, I doubt that I would have gone into the Transition Year Program. I would have entered university through another program, perhaps the Non-Matriculated Adult program" (Interview #7, 1992).

The interviewee found the program very restrictive and filled with components which detracted from the time needed to succeed at the course work.[50] The participant was angered by a study skills program she was required to attend. "The course was 'totally ludicrous'". It was more of a psycho-analysis of native people than the delivery of skills to help students succeed in university (Interview #7, 1992). She felt the Transition Year Program placed its students in a precarious situation by requiring them to attend the class

Another student (who did not complete the program) was also disgruntled with the program. He described his experience in the program as "disappointing". "It was a totally new experience for everyone, we were hopeful and we were scared" (Interview #9, 1993). The respondent did not feel that he was academically prepared for the program. He would have rather not been given admission to the program and told to upgrade. He went into the program hoping to fulfill a dream and came away feeling like a failure. He felt they had done him a disservice by letting him in the program when he was not academically prepared.

Participants felt they benefitted from the program to varying degrees. Everyone stated that the program allowed them into the institution and gave them an opportunity that they may not have had otherwise.

The study skills component was cited as being beneficial by all students except one. Study skills taught the students: time management, test writing techniques, note taking and stress management. Interviewee #1 stated:

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[50] The respondent stated that she did not like having to attend study skills classes and meetings required by the Transition Year Program. She found them to be "a waste of time".

> ...many aspects of the program were beneficial. The study skills course taught the student what we needed to help us succeed in the post secondary environment. We were taught to study better and more effectively. We were taught to research and gather information for assignments. We were also taught time management techniques. This proved to be important because at times I tended to become over-involved in extra curricular activities. (Interview #1, 1992)

Interviewee #9 commented:

> the writing and study skills programs were helpful in showing me how to research and write reports but it was as confusing as hell to have to learn to write in one class and actually having to write in another. We were not given any practice time. (Interview#9, 1993)

The TYP coordinator and Native Student Services support staff were praised by the participants. The support staff helped the students cope with many of the uncertainties and problems they faced in the early days of the program. Interviewee #4 described his experience:

> Support staff were helpful and helped students cope with university life. The coordinator tried to keep us afloat because she knew what we were going through. It was problematic for the students that Native Student Services and

the CUT had no control over Athabasca courses or instructors.[51]

The support network created among the TYP students was seen as beneficial and as essential to a students success in the program. The support group that developed among the Transition Year students was essential because many of the students do not have people in their families or friendship circles that they can talk to about school work or school related problems.[52] Networking among the students helps eliminate the alienation one can experience on a large campus. The Transition Year Program brings Native students together at the beginning of the school year and enables them to create friendships with other students enrolled in the program. This was viewed as "an edge against alienation". One respondent stated that it was important for her to associate with people of her own cultural background in a potentially alienating situation. (Interview#6, 1992)

Recommendations

There have been many changes in the TYP since its inception. As a result, some of the recommendations made by students in the early years were incorporated into the program as it evolved from phase to phase. In this summary, the recommendation will indicate which program, the Coordinated University Transfer (CUT), the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) or the Transition

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[51] For example, one instructor from Athabasca University (the Interviewee referred to her as "the man hater") told the class that if they were men the chances of passing the course were"not good".

[52] Many students enrolled in the TYP are "first generation" university students. This means that they are the first people in their families or friendship circles who have gone to university.

Year Program (TYP) the respondent was a member of. When asked to recommend improvements to the program, former students made a number of suggestions.

Coordinated University Transfer (CUT)

Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) students' recommendations dealt primarily with the structure of the program, its location, the courses offered, and the screening process.

All interviewed students cited the location of the program as problematic. The program's location caused the students to be alienated from rest of the student body. All classes except one were taken in classrooms in Athabasca Hall and were attended by only CUT students. Although this situation caused students to bond with each other it also caused the respondents to feel like they were not part of the university student body as a whole but merely participants in the CUT.

The CUT program students only had access to the Arts Faculty. As a result some of the early students were forced to route their studies through the Arts Faculty which caused them to take unnecessary courses. Participants felt they should be able to enter whichever Faculty they wish.

During the CUT program, course instructors were employed by Athabasca University. This situation caused one respondent to question the interest of the instructors. He remarked "they were indifferent to the needs of the students and this was discouraging" (Interview #3, 1992).

All respondents made reference to the courses they took while in the program. "The courses we took were set for us. We were not able to take what interested us. This was a struggle for people who were not sure whether they belonged on campus" (Interview #9, 1993). Another stated that, "it would have been beneficial for students to take courses that interested them when they began the program. This (compulsory courses) made the courses hard to complete" (Interview #3, 1992).

All students strongly recommended a more effective screening process. Students stated that many who entered the program did not know what they were getting into and did not have the academic background to succeed. One suggested a 4 or 6 week intensive program during the summer to allow students the opportunity to "live the university lifestyle for awhile". He stated that many students are drawn by the prestige of going to university without knowing what it entails (Interview #9, 1993).

This same CUT respondent stated, "it seemed as though the program was trying to fill a quota. It didn't really matter if you had the academic background. People were set up for failure" (Interview #9, 1993). People began in the program with a variety of academic backgrounds with some more prepared for the program than others. "Sure it's good to be motivated and have world experience but you must have the academic foundations when you are dealing in the academic world. Some people understood while others did not" (Interview #9, 1993).

It was very difficult for students to see their fellow students drop out. "You get to know them really well because you were with them all the time. You knew they were able to do the work but some would not or could not commit the time needed to succeed" (Interview #4, 1992). The program coordinator incorporated a more stringent screening process during the 1987/88 academic year.[53]

One CUT respondent stated that "it would have been nice to have more social events" (Interview #5, 1992). Students received support while on campus but little when they were at home. Social events would have allowed them to meet informally. This student spent much of her time at home working on school work. Her child went to bed early and this left her the entire night to spend on her studies which was good for her marks but not good for her social life.

Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP)

The CUTP participants made some of the same recommendations regarding location, course selection, and Faculty access as the CUT students. In addition to the suggestions dealing with the structure of the program, they recommended changes which dealt with the program's impact on and its responsibilities to the Native community. The recommendations moved outside the parameters of the 'on-campus' experience.

One respondent recommended a community liaison program encouraging Native elementary and high school students to attend post secondary institutions. He stated that Native students need more role models.

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[53] Participants were given diagnostic tests to evaluated their writing and comprehension skills. Prior to the introduction of these diagnostic tests, participants were judged on life experience and motivation.

This recommendation was undertaken by Native Student Services in 1986 with the creation of a Community Liaison position. Doreen L'Hirondelle traveled to schools across Northern Alberta which had a high concentration of Native students. In 1990, this program changed its focus to "on-campus" visits by native students.

A number of respondents would like to see a Native Director for both Native Student Services and as Coordinator for the the Transition Year Program. The comment was made that there has been a change in the Indian community and that "the days of White people running Native programs are over" (Interview #2,1992). It would also provide a role model for Native students.

One student recommended that the University set up a liaison program to link industry with Native students on campus. As the situations is now, the university is isolated. Industry people are constantly looking for qualified native people to fill positions in their companies (Interview #3,1992). Another felt that the CUTP should have a higher profile on campus. The program was not well advertised on campus and many departments did not know that the program existed. The increased campus profile was seen as a means of gaining access to more Faculties on campus.

Transition Year Program (TYP)

Recommendations made by Transition Year Students included changes to benefit both the TYP student while on campus and the larger Native community.

Respondent would like to see more students admitted into the program so "no qualified students are turned away" (Interview #1, 1992). Increasing the number of students admitted to the program would have positive results in the Native community (Interview #1, 1992). Presently, student enrollment in the program is limited by program funding and staff.

All respondents shared a concern about instructors and tutors. One respondent stated that Native instructors and Native tutors are a must for a Native program. (Interview #2, 1992) The respondent also stated that Native students feel more comfortable with Native instructors and that the instructor serves as a role model.

Many respondents questioned the selection of tutors. Respondents related their experience with a tutor. One student described her experience as "frustrating because he was an eccentric and spoke a 'totally different language'". Another student felt unable to relate to some of the tutors and in particular, the English tutor. The respondent described the tutor as "someone who could have been speaking Greek for all I knew; I just couldn't understand what he meant. It sure didn't help my English mark" (Interview #8, 1993).

A peer counselling or buddy system was recommended. The system would be set up between new students and returning students. It was be nice to have a person show you around the campus. The buddy system would extend past the orientation given to TYP students at the beginning of the school year.

A recommendation was made by a TYP student who would like to see a "mini-orientation" program in the March or April to let potential students see how the university system works. She felt that the NASU program was beneficial but it did not give the student an accurate view of the campus because it was given during the summer when there few students on campus.

The suggestion was that the Transition Year Program and Native Student Services be given a larger office. The present office is cramped and understaffed. She felt the university administration should improve funding of the program (Interview #2, 1992).

The students involved in this analysis were relatively well prepared academically. Six of the nine students interviewed had achieved a Grade 12 standing.

The participants enrolled in the program for generally the same reason; to obtain the credentials to help them secure a meaningful job. The experiences they had cannot be seen as too unlike the experience of other, non-aboriginal students, attempting post secondary studies. However, these students felt insecurities of starting something new, the financial constraints and the fear of failure more than the others. All but one of the participants were first generation university students (one participant's mother had an education degree). Additionally, most Aboriginal families are not able to financially support a family member pursuing a post secondary education as is the case with some non-Aboriginal families with members attending university.

Some students felt that they "didn't belong" on the campus and sought the comfort of other Aboriginal students on campus. The contact with other Aboriginal students enabled some to come to terms with their Indian heritage; something that they had denied in the past.

The students built a support network with other students in the program because as the program numbers increased, it was physically impossible for the TYP coordinator to give the personal support or counselling they may have required. The TYP coordinator position has evolved into an administrative position only because no additional staff have been added to accommodate the ever increasing number of students enrolled in the program. For example, in 1988/89 the CUTP had 5 students enrolled; in 1992/93, there are 80 students and still only 1 coordinator.

Chapter 5

Analysis and Conclusions

When the Transition Year Program, sponsored by the Office of Native Student Services, began in the mid 1980s, similar "alternative access" programs had been operating at various Canadian universities for almost 15 years. Demands for an access program for Aboriginal students were coming from within the University community, The University of Alberta Senate Task Force Report on Native Students(1978), and from Native organizations across the province, Proposal to the University of Alberta Senate Task Force on Native Students (1977). Dr. Carl Urion, then Director of Native Student Services stated that he was receiving between 300-500 enquiries per year from perspective Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students were interested in pursuing a post secondary education but were obstructed by their lack of academic preparation. It was obvious that there would have to be some flexibility in admission criteria to allow Native students to pursue post secondary instruction at the University of Alberta. The Transition Year Program "opened the door" for them. The Transition Year Program allowed them entry to the institution but after that it was up to them.

Although the Transition Year Program was created specifically to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, the University of Alberta has other "alternative access" programs.

As early as 1910-11, The University of Alberta Calendar makes reference to "Conditioned Students" who are students who have not completed their matriculation examination. This can be viewed as "alternative access".

The Unclassified student program began at the University of Alberta in 1982 on a two year trial basis. Students enrolled in this program are permitted to register in a limited number of University courses. Documentation of past education is normally not required except to demonstrate English Language Proficiency or to establish that prerequisite courses have been completed. Students must obtain an minimum grade of 4.0 in all courses taken under this status.

The TYP program was designed to help the student development the skills they needed to successfully compete in the larger university setting. Students were given a variety of personal and group services. Study skills and supplementary tutorials helped the students complete course requirements.

Hugh King, Associate Dean and Director of Records stated that many Faculties are looking at ways to help students over their first year on campus because there is such a big transition from high school to university (King, 1992). He stated that programs similar to the Transition Year Program could be started in various Faculties on campus (King, 1992).

In the early days of the program, there was very little support form the university administration or the university community. Administration would not financially support the program and the Faculties were reluctant to admit Aboriginal students.

The Transition Year Program has had a long history of financial woes. Program administrators had misgivings about running the program because at times it took up to 60% of the Native Student Services operating budget.

The TYP is tremendously cost effective. It uses only existing resources to provide university access to individuals who would otherwise be marginal candidates for admission. The program is necessary because at least 40% of the potential students with whom they deal have virtually no chance to meet even non-matriculated adult admission criteria, but many of them demonstrate ability to succeed.

The University of Alberta has not provided core funding for this program from the beginning. The program has had to solicit external funding from the onset and as a result the program is in jeopardy every year. In 1985, the coordinator proposed a tripartite funding agreement between the province, the federal government and the University but the University would not support the initiative (Laboucane, 1992).

In 1989/1990 academic year, the Transition Year Program coordinator's position was base funded by the university. Although the coordinator's position was funded, the Office of Native Student Services lost its' Community Liaison position. Essentially, the Office of Native Student Services did not gain in the transaction. They are still working with the same number of staff members, so the change simply reflects a change in strategies for promotion of access.

One must question the commitment the University administration has to the Transition Year Program and to the Aboriginal community as a whole when it does not take the steps to ensure the continuation and the success of a program that caters specifically to Aboriginal students. The University has a "free program." Although the program is located on the University of Alberta campus, the University does not pay any of the costs of the program. In fact, in the early years of the program, Athabasca University absorbed most of the costs incurred by the program. If not for the financial input of Athabasca University, it is doubtful that the program would have survived.

The program's success is due to the hard work and dedicated staff of Native Student Services who have kept the program afloat with little or no financial support from the University of Alberta.

There was very little support for the program from some Faculties on campus. The Arts Faculty was the only one to admit Transition Year students for the first 3 years of the program. Native Student Services, acting as an advocate for Native students on campus perceived that the major faculties of Science, Arts and Education were "cool" to the idea of admitting native students into their faculties under special admissions. Dr. Urion stated that between 1982-86 he approached personnel in several Faculties, and particularly because they represented the greatest demand, the Arts, Science and Education Faculties, to discuss the admission of Native students in a special access program, but they were "not interested." He said that in such discussions representative of the Science faculty stated that they were not interested in having Indian students in his faculty. The reason was that the Faculty had to maintain academic standards; the admission of Indian students, it was inferred, would compromise those standards. Similarly, a "gatekeeper" official in the Faculty of Education commented that Indian students were "all marginal", and a representative of the Faculty Arts maintained that it was a disservice to Indian students to admit any of them to such a special access program. The program received increased acceptance within the university community with the admission of TYP to various Faculties: the Faculty of Science (1989), the Faculty of Business (1991), and the Faculty of Education (1992).

Literature on Aboriginal post secondary programs states that the institution has a responsibility to ensure the success of the students it brings on campus. For example,
Estelle Fuchs' study of the subjective views of Native student attending post secondary institutions states that if an academic institution intends to actively recruit Aboriginal students it must have a plan to help the student succeed. She states that it is not enough to simply bring the Aboriginal student to campus but an on-going support network must to in place to assist the student. If an Aboriginal student does not succeed at post secondary study that it may not be entirely the student's fault and the institution must shared the blame.

Additionally, Conrad Sharrow's study of admission considerations for Aboriginal students to Post Secondary institutions states institutions delivering programs to native students have a responsibilities to those students.

The institutes which have the greatest degree of success have developed an on-campus educational program that has been specifically designed to anticipate the student's needs from the moment he/she arrives at school. It does not appear that the University of Alberta has made this commitment to the TYP students and the Aboriginal community.

As the program evolved the administrators were able to work out some of the problems they were experiencing with the program. For example, high drop-out rates in 1986/87 caused the coordinator to readjust the entrance requirements for participants. Increasing the admission criteria helped improve the completion rate.

As younger more academically qualified students became interested in attending the program the coordinator was able to lower the admission age and increase the entrance criteria. For example, in 1991 the admission age was lowered to 18 from 24. This enabled Aboriginal high school graduates to attend the program. The high school graduates were more academically prepared than many of their predecessors.

The TYP program in particular was able to increase its entrance requirements. This policy had a positive affect on the program because an increased number of students had completed their Grade 12 requirements and were thus more adequately prepared for post secondary study.

The University of Alberta took some of the transiency out of the program when it took sole responsibility for the program in 1989/90. While the program was administered by Athabasca University, the students were at their mercy. If Athabasca

University could not find an instructor for a course, they did not offer it. This situation stranded some students and left others disgruntled.

Many of the students who entered the program were "first generation post secondary students" who are deemed to be riskier that the traditional university student. Keith Allen, in his article on the Transition Year Program the University of Toronto states that unlike their more privileged counterparts, TYP students do not have a long history of university involvement (Allen, 1992:16).

Most TYP students had not thought of a university education as an option for themselves. The opportunity presented itself, in the form of an alternative access program, which allowed them to gain entry.

To justify the continuation of any program, there must be evidence of success. At a post secondary institution success is determined by the number of people in the program and the number of people completing the program and ultimately, the number of people who graduate with degrees. Unfortunately, during its eight years of existence the Transition Year Program (TYP) has graduated only 3 students with Bachelor degrees from the University of Alberta. However this situation is expected to improve because of the number of students nearing completion of their degree. Forty-four of the 61 students or 72% who entered Faculties at the University of Alberta are still pursuing a degree. One of the graduates is currently pursuing graduate studies.

The graduation rate deals only with those students who completed their degrees at the University of Alberta. Students who complete the Transition Year Program and continue their education at other institutions are not included in this number.

Low TYP enrollments from 1985 to 1988 coupled with the limited academic preparedness of the participants are the primary cause of the low graduation rate. For example, in 1986/87 only 2 people completed the program and consequently, nobody continued studies in a Faculty. Larger enrollments since 1989 will greatly increase the number of students who graduate with a degree.

Although the number of graduates is presently low, this situation is sure to change in the future since the majority of the TYP students are in their third, fourth and fifth years of study. A number of graduations are anticipated in 1994.

Universities traditionally measures its success by the number of graduates it produces, but the Transition Year Program's success cannot be solely determined by the number of former students who obtained degrees. Many former TYP participants have obtained responsible positions in organizations both in their home communities and elsewhere. Many are experiencing a better quality of life after the program and attribute it to the skills and confidence they obtained while in university.

Some interviewed students indicated that they were able to take pride in their Indian heritage for the first time in their lives as a result of the Transition Year Program and the Native positive role models they met both in the TYP and on campus. This acceptance of oneself can have a positive impact on a person's future.

Transition Year students, like many Aboriginal post secondary students are lured away from their studies by recruiters from a variety of governmental and private sector agencies attempting to fulfill their "affirmative action" obligations. Aboriginals students at the University of Alberta are regularly "courted" by recruiters. Since many Aboriginals attend post secondary institutions in order to obtain a secure job with an attractive salary, the recruiters offer them a short cut which some take.

The program was able to increase the the native student population at the University of Alberta. The increased native student population can be partly linked to the development and implementation of the Native Student Policy which was ratified by the General Faculties Council in 1992.

Regardless of whether a student continues his studies upon completion of the program or not, the University of Alberta is no longer viewed as inaccessible and a university degree as unattainable.

An increased number of Aboriginal students are attempting post secondary study as a result of one of their friends or relatives attending the TYP in previous years. One former student stated that she had 2 sisters and a niece who attended the TYP program after she completed. The subsequent participants had the attitude that if she can successfully complete the program, so can I. For this reason alone the Transition Year Program can be deemed a success. The initial student was very proud that she had served as a role model. She was also a great source of pride for her family.

It appears that Aboriginal students are attaining the "cultural capital" Bourdieu speaks of. Students are learning the mechanics of successful completion of University study. They are learning the skills needed to succeed and the internal workings of the campus. They are relaying this information to friends and family members. This transmission of information is making the transition to post secondary study easier for those who come after them.

Students were generally happy to be attending a post secondary institution, an opportunity that many of them believed would never be available to them. Although they were happy to be on campus, some did not let others know that they were part of an "alternative access program". One student stated that he felt embarrassed to tell people he was in the CUTP.

The TYP program has been successful in its mandate of increasing the number of Aboriginal students enrolled at the University of Alberta. The Transition Year Program has opened the door to higher learning for many Aboriginal students who may not have had the opportunity to do so otherwise.

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INTERVIEWS

Administrators

Boehm, Reinhild, Director, Native Student Services (1988-1992) Personal Interview, University of Alberta, November 17, 1992.

Kaida, June. Transition Year Program (TYP) coordinator, (1990-92) Personal Interview, October 19,1992.

King, Hugh. Associate Registrar and Director of Records. Personal Interview, University of Alberta, November 9, 1992.

L'Hirondelle, Doreen. Community Liaison Representative (1986-1989) Telephone Interview, February 16, 1993.

Laboucane, Jeanine, Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) coordinator, (1985-86) Personal Interview, November 9, 1992.

Sharpe, Natalie. Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) coordinator, (1988-89) Personal Interview, November 18, 1992.

Urion, Carl. Director, Native Student Services (1982-1985, 1986-87) Personal Interview, University of Alberta, November 12, 1992.

Participants

#1	TYP	(1991/92)	Personal Interview	October 17, 1992
# 2	CUTP	(1988/89)	Personal Interview	October 19, 1992
# 3	CUTP	(1987/88)	Personal Interview	October 21, 1992
# 4	CUT	(1985-86)	Personal Interview	November 3, 1992
# 5	CUT	(1985-86)	Personal Interview	November 12,1992
# 6	TYP	(1990/91)	Personal Interview	December 1, 1992
# 7	TYP	(1991/92)	Personal Interview	December 1, 1992
# 8	CUTP	(1989/90)	Personal Interview	January 3, 1993
# 9	CUT	(1985-86)	Telephone Interview	January 26, 1993

Appendix A

Interview #1
TYP Student 1991/92

Informant #1 is a Native woman who attended the Transition Year Program during the 1991/92 academic year. She was single, 25 years old and graduated from Grade 12 in Alberta in 1986 with a general diploma. She was 1 of 54 students who began the program and 1 of 50 who completed.

She learned of the Transition Year Program through the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia. When she contacted the University of Alberta, she was referred to Native Student Services by the Registrar's Office. After the initial screening by the Transition Year Program's Coordinator, June Kaida, she underwent testing and was admitted into the program. Originally she wanted to enter the Education Faculty but the TYP did not have an entry program into that Faculty. She then decided to enter the Arts Faculty with a concentration in Psychology.

When asked why she wanted to attend university, the respondent replied that she wanted to get a secure job and maintain a better standard of living than she had experienced. Apart from the economic aspects of obtaining a university degree, she also wanted to obtain better writing and analytical skills. She stated that she wanted to write a book. The informant was raised in an atmosphere in which education was held in high regard. She stated that "I always knew I would go to University it just a matter of when, where and how I would get the money to go" (Interview, October 17, 1992). The financial constraints were removed when the respondent was granted C31 status.

When asked why she enrolled in the Transition Year Program she stated that she could have entered the university through the regular route since she was a Grade 12 graduate but chose the TYP because of its supplementary tutorials and study skills programs. She also stated that she wanted to meet more native people and be in a supportive environment while adjusting to student life.

The time spent in the Transition Year Program brought about many changes in the respondent. Not only did she have to deal with the academic challenges but also had to deal with a number of personal issues. When asked how she managed financially, academically and emotionally during the program she stated, "It was a scary experience because it was a 'whole bunch of responsibilities on my shoulders I was not sure I could do it' " (Interview, October 17, 1992). She described being in a state of "constant emotional turmoil" and a period of self discovery.

> I learned about the limitations I place on myself. Growing up I was taught that there was always some one better than me. I always thought that money was the big thing in life but I found out that this is not true (Interview, October 17, 1992).

Although she grew up near an Indian reserve she did not know many native people. She was raised by a non-Native relative who was worried that she and her brothers would get into trouble and as a result lived a sheltered life away from her people. When she began TYP, suddenly Native issues became personal issues for her. This was emotionally draining. The strength and understanding of other Native students on campus gave her the ability to deal with these issues in a supportive environment.

The respondent stated that she had financial difficulties during the year. She worked part time. because the allowance she received from the Department of Indian Affairs did not cover her monthly expenses.[54]

Academically, the respondent felt she did well but had difficulties in the beginning and did not do as well as she wanted. At first the courses were overwhelming.but she did better when she learned what was required of her.

The respondent stated that many aspects of the Transition Year program were beneficial. The study skills courses provided by Native Student Services helped tremendously. They showed her how and what to study. The time management seminar was useful when exams and papers were dues. Test writing techniques and stress management beneficial during examination week.

The Native Adult Summer University (NASU) program was invaluable. The one week program allowed the student to become familiar with the university campus. The were able to meet other students in the TYP and form friendships with native students in their classes. It was important that this opportunity to familiarize the students with the campus and other students take place before classes begin and the campus is full of students. She stated that she was grateful to be with the same people.

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[54] According to the Post Secondary Assistance program guidelines, a single student with no dependents receives a monthly allowance of $675.

The support group that developed among the Transition Year students was essential. Networking among the students helped eliminate the alienation one can experience on a large campus. The Transition Year Program brought (Native students) together and enabled them to create friendships. This was viewed as "an edge against alienation". It was important for the respondent to associate with people of her own cultural background.

The staff were supportive and helped the students cope with many of the uncertainties and problems they faced in the early days of the program. Many of the difficulties she encountered in the program were anticipated by Native Students Services. For example, writing effectively was hard for the interviewee but NSS provided workshops to improve the.students writing skills. Native student services also provided personal and academic counselling to the students.

Presently, the respondent is in the Arts faculty but would like to transfer from the Psychology department to the Economics department.

> When I went into the program I wanted to be a Psychologist but after learning more about the subject I realized it was not for me. There were a lot of Native people in the social sciences and I thought I would be more useful in business related fields (Interview, October 17,1992).

While in the Transition Year Program, the respondent realized that Psychology was not the course of study she wished to pursue.

The informant states that the Transition Year Program assisted her in obtaining her present situation by helping her gain entry into the University. It also allowed her to adapt to the system in a supportive environment. However, she is not certain whether the TYP is solely responsible for her success or whether the determination she acquired over the year from "constantly meeting and overcoming challenges" should be credited. She acknowledges that the Transition Year Program helped her get accustomed to campus and give her the opportunity to gain confidence in herself by completing the program.

The interviewee became involved in the Aboriginal Student Council. She felt that her candid personality caused her to be pushed into the role of spokesperson for her group. Although involvement in the group was beneficial, sometimes the extra curricular activities became overwhelming.

The respondent described her experience in the program as positive. She learned a lot about herself and what really mattered to her. She challenged herself academically and emotionally and as a result gained confidence and understanding of herself and others.

The respondent maintained many of the friends she had prior to attending University but made many new friends. She was able to discuss issues with new friends. She learned to appreciate what other people have to say and not always look for people to reaffirm her thoughts.

When asked to recommend improvements to the program, a number of suggestions were offered. The first suggestion was that the Transition Year Program and Native Student Services be given a larger office. The present office is cramped and understaffed. She felt the university administration should improve funding of the program.

The respondent would like to see more students admitted into the program so "no qualified students are turned away". Presently, student enrollment in the program is limited by program funding and staff.

Native instructors and Native tutors are a must. The respondent stated that students feel more comfortable with a Native instructor and the instructor serves as a role model

The respondent would like to see a Native Director for both Native Student Services and as Coordinator for the the Transition Year Program. She states that there has been a change in the Indian community and that "the days of White people running Native programs are over".

Interview #2
CUTP Student 1987/88

Informant #2 is a 28 year old Native man who attended the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) during the 1987/88 academic year. He was single, 22 years old and had graduated from Grade 12 with a general diploma in British Columbia in 1985. He was 1 of 11 students who began the program and 1 of 4 who completed.

He learned about the CUTP program through a friend who was planning to attend. He approached Dr. Carl Urion, Director of Native Student Services who gave him information about the program. He stated that he was "really excited" about the philosophy of the program. He was later referred to the Coordinated University Transfer Program's coordinator, Gillian Sanderson. Miss Sanderson administered a battery of diagnostic tests, including the Strong-Campbell and writing sample. Both he and his friend entered and completed the program.

When asked why he wanted to attend university, the respondent replied that he wanted to get a secure job, perhaps with Federal Government. He stated, "I wanted to get a degree in something. I wanted to do something for myself. I wanted to go against the stereotypes of Indians"(Interview, October 19, 1992). He believed that no matter what happened to you, your education cannot be taken away from you. It is a secure investment in time and money.

When asked why he enrolled in the Coordinated University Transfer Program, the respondent stated that he could have entered university through the regular access route because he was a Grade 12 graduate. He had attended post secondary institutes prior to enrolling in the CUTP. He attended Langara College and a bible college in Vancouver. He dropped out of both of these institutions because he felt alienated. Because of the negative experiences in both of these institutions which he described as a "sink or swim situation", the respondent viewed the program as individually oriented and less threatening than the regular access route. (Interview, October 19, 1992) He chose the CUTP because of its supplementary tutorials, study skills programs. and individualized approach.

The respondent was asked how he managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year in the program. The informant stated that he was worried in the beginning because he had been at other post secondary institutions and not liked them. He hoped that this experience would have been difference because. he wanted to get good marks and prove to himself that he belonged on campus.

He was apprehensive about being in a program with Indians. He had been inundated with the negative "Indian" stereotypes". He had only met one Indian person who had gone to university and described him as obnoxious and boastful. This perception changed when he was in the program. He met many native people from different parts of Canada through the program. Each person had a variety of experiences. It was wonderful to be in a situation with intelligent, motivated Indian people. .

He also had the perception that you had to give up your Indian identity to be successful. Over the year he realized that this was not so.

Financially, the year was very difficult. Accommodations were expensive and the allowance he got from the Department of Indian Affairs was minimal He was not able to work because of the time commitment needed to succeed at school.

Academically, he did fairly well. He worked hard but sometimes had to force himself to study. He ranked second of the eight students in the program. There is no way of knowing how he compared to other undergraduate students because the classes were isolated from the university population and attended only by CUTP students.

The respondent stated that many aspects of the program were beneficial. The study skills course was useful. The support staff were very helpful and helped students cope with university life. The CUTP coordinator worked as a liaison between students and faculty, funding agencies and bureaucrats. Academic counselling services provided by Native Student Services were helpful because they helped him determine which field of study to pursue.

The respondent described his experience in the program as enjoyable. It was easier to get motivated because of the smaller group and everybody helped each other. There was cooperation and little or no competition between the students. He felt secure and accepted in the CUTP environment. It was nice to have the "reserve feeling brought to campus". (Interview, October 19,1992)

The informant is currently in the third year of a Bachelor's degree at the School of Native Studies. He stated that he "tried out a lot of different courses: Psychology, Sociology and Political Science before settling on Native Studies". He wanted to get more information about native traditions.

The program helped the student gain entry to the University and a variety of support services helped ease the transition period. The CUTP taught the student skills that helped them succeed in the post secondary environment. Students were taught to study better and more effectively. They were taught to research and gather information for assignments. They were also taught time management techniques. This proved to be important because at times the respondent tended to become over-involved in extra curricular activities.

The respondent stated that the CUTP was responsible for giving the informant both more and less opportunities. More opportunities were given because the program allowed him into university. It also allowed him to adjust to student life in a non-competitive, non-threatening environment. However, the courses provided to the students were limited. Courses were taken from Athabasca University and some of them did not transfer to the University of Alberta. Essentially, the courses were used to determine the student's academic abilities.

The respondent recommended a number of improvements to the program. He would like to see a community liaison program encouraging Native high school students to attend post secondary institutions. He stated that high school students need more native role models.

The courses offered to the students in the CUTP should be increased. Students were only allowed to take specific courses. For administrative reasons, Athabasca University offered a limited number of courses to CUTP students.

Course instructors were employed by Athabasca University. The respondent questioned the interest of the instructors. They were indifferent to the needs of the students. This was discouraging to the students.

The structure of the program caused the students to be alienated from the rest of student body. All classes except one were taken in classrooms in Athabasca Hall and were attended by only CUTP students. Although this situation caused students to bond with each other it also caused the respondent to feel like he was not part of the university student body as a whole but merely a participant in the CUTP. He stated that he felt embarrassed to tell people he was in the CUTP.

Interview #3
CUTP Student 1987/88

Informant #3 is a 42 year old Native man who attended the Coordinated University Transfer Program (CUTP) during the 1987/88 academic year. He was married, 38 years old and had 5 children when he began the program. He is 1 of 20 students who began the program and 1 of 18 who completed. He graduated from Grade 12 and attended the University of Calgary in both the Social Work and Education Faculties in the early 1970s. He dropped out because of financial difficulties.[55]

He learned about the CUTP program through a friend who was in the program the previous year. He contacted Native Student Services for information specific to the CUTP. He wrote a number of diagnostic tests and was admitted into the program

When asked why he wanted to attend university he responded that he had been active in band politics for a number of years. He had always wanted to return to university and he found himself in the position to do so. He was unsuccessful at running for office and had no other commitments. He thought it would be a good time to go to university and the CUTP would be a good way to go.

He enrolled in the CUTP program because it would give him the skills he needed to succeed. He enrolled in University to help him gain knowledge about the farming business since he had run a family farm for many years. He entered university with the intent of entering the Agriculture and Forestry Faculty.

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[55] The respondent stated that it was difficult to raise a young family on the allowance he got from the Department of Indian Affairs.

When asked how he managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year, the respondent replied that academically he was worried because he had been out of school for a long time. Although he had taken a number of home study courses from Athabasca University and some special interest courses from Blue Quills College in Saddle Lake, he was still apprehensive about his academic skills. He did well in his courses in the CUTP and was admitted into the Agriculture and Forestry Faculty the following year. The study skills, especially the writing workshops were helpful in showing the respondent how to research and write reports. These skills he still uses today.

He stated that he felt "out of place" on campus because the students were so young. He was worried that his family would not adjust well to city life. They moved to Michener Park (student housing) where they liked the sense of community. They made friends, who were also students, and created a support network.

Financially, the respondent was able to support his family during the CUTP year through a combination of the Department of Indian Affairs student allowance and personal savings. However, after the savings ran out, supporting his family became very difficult.

The informant is currently employed as Director of a provincial organization which advises Alberta Chiefs on economic development and resource management. The organization serves as a liaison between Indian bands and developers.

The CUTP taught skills that helped the student to research and deal effectively with deadlines. The time management techniques he learned while in the program have helped him in his employment.

The student recommended that the University set up a liaison program to link industry with Native students on campus. As the situations is now, the university is isolated. Industry people are constantly looking for qualified native people to fill positions in their companies.

The program's location was a problem because it was out of the way. The student felt alienated from the rest of the student population because all of the courses were given in isolation.

CUTP should have a higher profile on campus and in the community. The program was not well advertised on campus and many departments did not know that the program existed.

He recommended that the classroom be moved away from the coffee area. It was very distracting for the students attending classes when others were socializing down the hall.

He also recommended that some type of "buddy system" be set up between new students and returning students. It was be nice to have a person show you around the campus. The buddy system would extend past the orientation given to CUTP students at the beginning of the school year.

Interview #4
CUT Student 1985/86

Informant #4 was a 25 year old Native man who attended Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) during its first year of operation during the 1985/86 academic year.. He was a grade 12 graduate. He completed a trades apprenticeship program through the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). He had been employed as a tradesman for 3 years prior to beginning the program. He is 1 of 14 students who began the program and 1 of 9 who completed.

He learned about the CUT program through the Director of Native Student Services, Dr. Carl Urion. He spoke with the Director a year prior to starting the program and expressed a desire to return to school.

When asked why he wanted to attend university he replied that he had been influenced by his mother. He explained that his parents were very different, one was a blue collar union man while the other was an academic. His mother was a teacher and described the university experience as "mind expanding".

He enrolled in the program because he wanted to make a career change and his mother was influential in his choice. He felt bored with his job and wanted an intellectual challenge. He said that "a trade was a great way to make money but not very satisfying" (Interview: November 3, 1992). Most of his friends were professionals and he felt intellectually inferior. He wanted to expand his knowledge and be with "smart" people. He wanted to take the "safe route" regarding his education and to have a plan for his education set out for him. He chose the TYP because of its study skills programs and smaller class size.

When asked how he managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year, he stated that he had a "challenging year". Emotionally , he described himself as being "distraught in the beginning". He felt really frustrated with himself and the system but said it helped build character. "You had to take the program seriously because if you didn't you were 'dead'" (Interview: November 3, 1992). He stated that the screening process during the first year was inadequate. It was very difficult to see his fellow student drop out. "You get to know them really well because you were with them all the time. You knew they were able to do the work but some would not or could not commit the time needed to succeed" (Interview: November 3, 1992).

The students expected University to be an extension of high school but it was very different. At times we felt like "sitting ducks just waiting to be 'picked off' by the system" (Interview: November 3, 1992). The University seemed impersonal. He stated that "if it was not for the Aboriginal Student lounge I would not have known any other students (besides my CUT colleagues)" (Interview: November 3, 1992). He also stated that he felt isolated as an aboriginal on campus.

Financially the respondent was secure. Although he was forced to live on a reduced budget he was prepared to make sacrifices to pursue his education. Mid way through the year he received treaty status through Bill C31 and the Federal Government paid for his education.

Academically, he got good grades. He learned perseverance and developed a "never die attitude". The students took a geography course which he described as "the course from hell." The course was taught by tutors from Athabasca University. The course was impossible for people with a non-academic background. Some of the tutors were "unsympathetic" towards to students and appeared to hold the attitude that if you cannot do the work, you should not be in university (Interview: November 3, 1992).

The respondent found many aspects of the program beneficial. The study skills and the writing skills programs were invaluable. He stated that the writing skills he acquired during the program "are useful to this day and helped him all the way through University" (Interview: November 3, 1992). The CUT taught skills that helped the student to get his writing capabilities up to a university level.

Support staff were helpful and helped students cope with university life. The coordinator tried to keep us afloat because she knew what we were going through. It was problematic for the students that Native Student Services and the CUT had no control over Athabasca courses or instructors.

The study skills, especially the writing workshops were helpful in showing the respondent how to research and write reports. It was hard being placed on the bell curve with other students in the university. He was amazed when he got a 6 in a course and attributed his mark to techniques he learned in the writing skills workshop (Interview: November 3, 1992).

He described his experience in the program as positive. It was a totally new experience for everyone; the students and the staff. It was stressed throughout the program that you could not fail any courses. Since it was designed for upgrading and transition into the University mainstream, one's performance was constantly assessed. The courses were very difficult.but he felt secure and accepted in the CUTP environment. It was nice having a cohesive group because they all went through the same experience. He stated that he missed the closeness with other students during the first year after the CUT. The informant is currently employed as a teacher at a reserve school near Edmonton. He graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree in 1991.

The CUT assisted him in obtaining his present situation by giving him access to the institution. But upon completion of the program, he was forced to transfer to the Arts Faculty and only later to transfer to the Education Faculty. This situation caused him to take unnecessary courses in the Arts faculty. The respondent stated that CUT students were accepted into the Arts Faculty on a probationary basis. The interviewee was not certain whether they were placed on probation because of their academic standing or if the program had made an agreement with the Faculty.

The respondent did not feel a part of the university population.

> We (CUT students) kept the illusion alive that we were part of the University but we were unclassified students in a classified institution. I did a lot of covering up. You tried to think that you were like anyone else but down deep you knew that if you screwed up once you was gone (Interview, November 3, 1992).

The respondent had many recommendations for the program.The courses we took were set for us. We were not able to take what interested us.

The program's location was a problem because it was out of the way. The CUT students felt alienated from the rest of the student population because all of the courses, except one, were given in isolation.

The students should have been able to enter whichever Faculty they wanted to enter and should not have be forced to enter the Arts Faculty. This caused students to take unnecessary courses.

He recommended a more effective screening process because many did not know what they were getting into and did not have the academic background to succeed. "It was difficult to see your friends drop out of the program. It made you wonder if you would be next" (Interview: November 3, 1992).

It would have been beneficial for students to take courses that interested them when they began the program. The students were forced to take specific courses which did not interest them. This made the courses hard to complete.

Interview #5
CUT Student 1984/85

Informant #5 is a 27 year old Native woman who attended the Coordinated University Transfer Program during its first year of operation in the 1985/86 academic year. She was married with one child and had not graduated from high school.[56] She is 1 of 14 students who began the program and 1 of 9 who completed.

She learned about the CUTP program through an newspaper article in the Windspeaker. When asked why she wanted to attend university the respondent replied that she always wanted to go to university. She heard that there were going to be changes made to the funding policy governing Treaty Indian students. She wanted to get a degree before the changes came because she felt it would be more difficult after the changes. She had been encouraged to pursue a post secondary education by a supportive high school teacher. When asked why she enrolled in the Coordinated University Transfer Program she stated that she chose the CUT because of its supportive atmosphere. Prior to attending the program, she had not lived off the reserve. The program allowed her to pursue her studies and development a support network with fellow students. She depended heavily on her fellow students for emotional support during the year.

When asked how she coped financially, academically and emotionally during the program she stated it was a "trying" year because she had a number of personal issues to deal with during this time. She was uncertain about moving from the reserve because she left her extended family and a secure job to attend the program. She was afraid of living in the city because of the crime and the crowds.

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[56] She was 10 credits short of graduating from Grade 12.

The university campus was overwhelming but she was supported by other native students in the program. She was intimidated by the number of people on campus. There were so many people on campus, the respondent described the university population as "like ants on an ant hill". It was frightening for a person from a small community.

It was also difficult for the respondent to deal with the number of fellow students who had become friends then dropped out of the program.

Financially, the respondent was sponsored by her band but the allowance she receive was inadequate. She "barely made ends meet" and there were no emergency funds. She depended on "rations" sent from home.

Academically, she did well. She won the CUT scholarship[57] during her year in the program. She found the work challenging and was not intimidated by competition. in, fact, she stated that the competition made her work harder.

The respondent found many aspects of the program helpful. The study skills program was very useful because they made her aware of the quality of work that was expected from her. The support staff at the Office of Native Affairs (Native Student Services) helped students cope with everyday university life.

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[57] The CUT scholarship is given a student in the Coordinated University Transfer program who completes all courses and has the highest GPA.

The Coordinated University Transfer coordinator worked as a liaison between students and faculty, funding agencies and bureaucrats. The Office of Native Affairs also provided academic counselling which directed the students to various disciplines.

The informant is currently employed as a post secondary education counsellor for her band. She calls it "the perfect job". She visits and encourages band sponsored students at various post secondary institutions in Alberta.

The respondent's experience in the program was positive. Although she was uncertain in the beginning, she quickly adapted to the situation. She was highly motivated and looked at campus life as a challenge. She felt secure and protected in the Coordinated University Transfer program environment. She felt the Coordinated University Transfer was her edge against the isolation she could have experienced on a large campus in a big city. She did not feel alone in "taking on the system". The respondents was especially happy because two of her sisters have since taken the TYP program. She felt that she had acted as a role model for her family.

The CUTP helped her ease into post secondary studies. She was able to become acquainted with the university system in a supportive environment. The program helped her develop study skills and time management techniques that aid her in her work.

The program allowed her into the university. It also allowed her to adjust to student life in a non-competitive, non-threatening environment. There were limitations to the program because in the early years of the program, students were only admitted to the Arts Faculty.

When asked to make recommendations to the program, the respondent had a number of suggestions. For example, the respondent found the program's location to be problematic because it was "so out of the way". The student felt alienated from the rest of the student population because many of the courses were given in isolation.[58] This situation was conducive to forming friendships with other CUTP students but not with others.

The respondent also stated that "it would have been nice to have more social events". Many students received support while on campus but little when they were at home. Social events would have allowed them to meet informally. This student spent much of her time at home working on school work. Her child went to bed early and this left her the entire night to spend on her studies.

Study groups and tutorials would have helped the students academically. Towards the end of the program, the remaining students formed their own "ad hoc" study group. The respondent thought it may have been beneficial to have this group set up earlier in the term.

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[58] The program offered 3 courses to its participants; one was taken with the general student population and two were taken in a classroom in Athabasca Hall with only CUTP students.

Interviewee #6
Transition Year Program 1990/91

Informant #6 is a Native woman who attend the TYP during the 1990/91 academic year. She was 23 years old and single when she began the program. She is 1 of 30 students who began the program and 1 of 24 who completed.

She learned about the Transition Year Program through an academic counsellor at Native Student Services at the University of Calgary. She had investigated the program in 1988 but decided not to attend at that time. The respondent did not know what she wanted to do after she had completed the program.

The respondent enrolled in university because she was working as a secretary and viewed it as a "dead end" job with no chance for advancement. She felt that she needed to make some positive changes in her life. She had always wanted to attend university and the TYP gave her the opportunity.

When asked how she coped financially, academically and emotionally during the program she described it as a growing experience.

Emotionally, the informant stated that she had some personal problems during the year which made it very difficult. The respondent did not know about the other counselling resources on campus and relied heavily on the TYP coordinator and NSS for personal and academic problems.

Financially, the respondent had a difficult time budgeting her money. As a student sponsored by Indian Affairs she had to live on a limited budget. She had worked prior to attending the program and was accustomed to having more money. However, she stated that "after the first couple of months" the money problem was rectified.by more astute budgeting.

The respondent did well academically but she did not feel that she worked as hard as she could have. The time and effort that she put into the course work was enough to cause her to complete the program.

She found the study skills program was very useful. The support staff at Native Student Services were helpful and helped students cope. The coordinator worked as a liaison between students and faculty, funding agencies and bureaucrats.

The respondent described her experience in the program as positive. Since she moved from Calgary to attend the program, she did not know anyone in Edmonton. The closeness of the TYP group enabled her to establish friendships. This support network helped throughout the year in both her personal and academic life.

The program also gave her the opportunity to take classes with the larger university population and this experience prepared her for the following year. The English class, taken with only TYP students, allowed her to take smaller classes and receive more personalized attention.

The supportive atmosphere among her peers and from the TYP coordinator made her feel comfortable on campus. It was hard to watch some students withdraw from the program especially when her best friend quit because she felt like quitting too.

The informant is currently in the second year of a Bachelor of Native Studies degree at the University of Alberta. She would like to transfer to the Criminology program in the Sociology department. She has been in close contact with another Native student in the Criminology program and thinks that this is what she would like to pursue.

The Transition Year Program assisted the respondent in gaining entry to the university. She did not feel that she could have been admitted because of her academic deficiency. The program also helped her familiarize herself with the university.

The respondent made a number of recommendations for the Transition Year Program and Native Student Services. She found the course work in the English class to be too light. She stated that extra or more challenging work in that class would have helped prepare her better for what was to come in the future. The class could have helped the students hone their writing.

She recommended a peer counselling program be set up among the native students through Native Student Services. The ability to meet other Native Students on campus would be beneficial for the TYP students because they can be used as a role model. The TYP students tended to become a closely knit group almost to the exclusion of others.

She questioned the selection of tutors for the TYP students. Ideally, the tutors should be native graduate students (when available). She described her experience with one of her tutors as frustrating because "he was an eccentric who spoke a 'totally different language'"

She described the transition from the TYP to the regular university system as difficult. It was hard to deal with the larger classes and not having the extra tutorials. There were less Native students in the classes and the respondent felt isolated. However, with one year experience she was better able to cope with the situation.

The student felt a real sense of accomplishment when she completed the program because she described herself as a "quitter" prior to the program. She was content that she had made the right choice in attending the TYP.

Interviewee #7
Transition Year Program 1991/92

Informant #7 is a Native woman. who attend the TYP during the 1991/92 academic year. She was 40 years old and married with 3 teenage children when she began the program. She is 1 of 54 students who began the program and 1 of 50 who finished. Prior to enrollment in the Transition Year Program she worked in a bank as a customer service clerk for 16 years. She was interested in making a career change. She began planning to attend university in 1988,. her goal of becoming a teacher firmly in place.

She learned about the TYP program through a fellow student at a local college she was attending to upgrade her English. She was planning to attend university. She had graduated from high school in 1969. She had taken a number of job related courses from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension.

The respondent was asked how she managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year in the program. The informant stated that she was worried in the beginning because she had been out of school for a long time. She stated that she felt "out of place" on campus because the students were all so young.

Financially, the respondent was able to maintain herself during the TYP year but she had to adjust her spending habits to accommodate her reduced budget.

Academically, she worked hard and got good grades. She did not feel she had the skills she needed to do well in university because she had been out of school for so many years.

The respondent did not find the Transition Year Program to be beneficial for her. She stated that if she knew then what she knows now, she doubts that she would have gone into the Transition Year Program. She would have entered university through another program, perhaps through the NMA student program. The interviewee found the program to be very restrictive and filled with components which detracted from the time needed to succeed at the course work.[59] The informant is currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program at the University of Alberta.

She described her experience in the program as both good and bad. The program was beneficial in the beginning but she found the study skills program to be "totally ludicrous". She found it to more of a psycho-analysis of native people than delivering skills to help students succeed in university. (Interview: December 1, 1992) She resented that Transition Year Program had placed its students in such a precarious situation.

The respondent had a number of recommendations for the program. She would like to see a "mini-orientation" program in the Spring to let potential students see how university system works.

She also found the the orientation seminar (NASU) held prior to the commencement of classes to contain too much information. Although some of the information she received was useful, she experienced "information overload". The support staff were very helpful at Native Student Services and she found the academic counselling beneficial.

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[59] The respondent stated that she did not like having to attend study skills classes and meetings required by the Transition Year Program. She found them to be "a waste of time".

Interview #8
TYP Student 1989/90

Informant #8 is a 26 year old Native man who attended the Transition Year Program (TYP) during the 1989/90 academic year. He was single and 23 years old. He had attended Alberta College for 2 years and had completed Grade 11. He was 1 of 31 students who began the program and 1 of 25 who completed.

He learned about the TYP program through a friend who was attending the University of Alberta. He approached the Transition Year Program Coordinator, Natalie Sharpe for more information. He stated that he had intended to train as a paramedic at NAIT rather than the University of Alberta.

When asked why he wanted to attend university, the respondent replied that he wanted to better himself and get a secure job. The idea of going to university was intriguing because he had not thought of it as an option for himself. He was the first person in his family who had attended university. When he was growing up in Northern Alberta, those in his immediate family and his acquaintances did not regard university or other post secondary institutions (except trade school) as options. He was raised with the idea that "having a trade was the 'way to go'; a way of attaining job security and of making a 'good living'" (Interview January 3, 1993).

When asked why he enrolled in the Transition Year Program, the respondent stated that he viewed the program as a secure environment in which to become accustomed to university life (Interview January 3, 1993). He chose the TYP because:

> everything was set up for the student: classes, tuition fee payments, textbooks, tutorials, and study skills programs. The program is very structured and that is good for the new student. All we had to do was "show up" (Interview, January 3, 1993).

The respondent was asked how he managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year in the program. The informant stated that he was worried in the beginning because he felt insecure about his academic abilities but managed financially and academically.

He was happy to be in a program with other Indian students. Prior to entering the program he stated that he "acknowledged his Indian heritage but was not 'proud of it' ". The opportunity to associate with intelligent, motivated Indian students helped "solidify" his Indian identity (Interview January 3, 1993).

Financially, the year was similar to the previous two years when he had been a student at Alberta College. He was "used to being broke so being in the TYP was no different" (Interview January 3, 1993). He worked part time in a convenience store to supplement his student loan.

Academically, he did fairly well. He worked hard but sometimes had to force himself to study. There were "too many diversions" vying for his time and attention. This situation was remedied as the year progressed.

The respondent stated that many aspects of the program were beneficial. The study skills course was useful because they helped him better deal with the academic demands that were place on him.

The TYP coordinator was "always there" to help students deal with problems, both personal and academic. Academic counselling services provided by Native Student Services were helpful because they helped him determine which field of study to pursue.

The respondent described his experience in the program as enjoyable because it placed a "human face on a large, potentially alienating, campus. A person did not feel as 'disconnected'" (Interview January 3, 1993). There was cooperation and little or no competition between the students. He felt secure and accepted in the TYP environment.

The informant has taken a year off to pay back some of his student loan. He plans to return to the University in September, 1993 and resume studies in the third year of a Bachelor of English degree. The program helped the student gain entry to the University and a variety of support services helped ease the transition period. The TYP taught the student skills that helped him succeed in the post secondary environment. Students were taught to study better and more effectively, to research, to better manage their time to meet deadlines.

The respondent recommended a number of improvements to the program. He would like to see access to more faculties for TYP students. A limited number of faculties accepted TYP students and as a result most were channelled into the Arts faculties. If a student wished to pursue other fields, they had to transfer into another faculty and some lost course credit in the transition.

The selection of tutors should be more closely monitored. The student felt unable to relate to some of the tutors and in particular, the English tutor. The respondent described the tutor as "someone who could have been speaking Greek for all I knew; I just couldn't understand what he meant. It sure didn't help my English mark" (Interview January 3, 1993). If possible, native graduate students should be employed as tutors. Not only do the students relate to them better but they also serve as role models.

Overall, the respondent felt he benefitted from the program and that it "took good care of him during his first year on campus" (Interview January 3, 1993).

Interview #9
CUT Student 1986/87

Informant #4 was a 24 year old Native man who attended Coordinated University Transfer (CUT) during its second year of operation during the 1986/87 academic year.. He graduated from Grade 12 with a general diploma in 1979. He was married with one child when he began the program. He is 1 of 14 students who began the program but he did not complete. He withdrew after three months in the program. He withdrew for personal and academic reasons.

He learned about the CUT program through his Band's Education Counsellor. He stated that his counsellor and others referred to the CUT program as the "back door to the University".

When asked why he wanted to attend university he replied that he had been influenced by a grade 10 school teacher. The teacher had encouraged him to pursue post secondary study. The respondent stated that he wanted to be a teacher.

He enrolled in the program because he wanted to go to university but did not feel that his grade 12 marks were high enough to get him in a a regular admission. He chose the CUT because it promised "gradual entry into the academic realm." He also expected to be given assistance to upgrade his Grade 12 English mark and his writing and study skills.

When asked how he managed financially, academically and emotionally during the year, he stated that he had a "devastating year". Emotionally , he described himself as being "distraught". At that point in his life he was coming to terms with many unresolved issues in his past. These issues combined with the stress of school were overwhelming. He stated that he felt "totally unprepared" to deal with the academic demands that were made of him. He felt inadequate and tried to compensate by working longer and harder. He said he neglected his family and himself and said "I burnt myself out"(Interview, January 26, 1993).

It was very difficult to see his fellow student drop out. "You never knew if you would be next" He also stated that he felt alienated on campus.

Financially the respondent was under great constraint. He was sponsored to go to school by his band but he had a wife and child to support on a meagre allowance. He had moved from the reserve to go to school and had many additional expenses.[60] "Being broke all the time did not help the situation any" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

Academically, he was frustrated, both with himself and with the system. He worked very hard and hoped with "all his heart" that he would grasp the concepts and succeed academically. He questioned his intellectual ability and wondered "if something was wrong with him because others seemed to 'get it'" (Interview, January 26, 1993). The respondent recalled an anthropology professor who tried very hard to help the students complete a course. He sensed that the professor was frustrated with the inability of the students to grasp basic concepts. " One day the professor looked at us and said 'You guys should know this stuff, its basic'; it may have been basic to him but to us it was foreign"

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[60] The respondent had to pay rent and transportation costs while living in the city .

(Interview, January 26, 1993). The respondent stated that "with our different backgrounds, what was basic to him was not basic to us. It made me feel inadequate" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

Support staff were helpful and helped students cope with university life. The coordinator helped the students "in every way they could" He felt that they went beyond the call of duty [61] However, the respondent felt they had done him a disservice by letting him in the program when he was not academically prepared.

The respondent stated that the screening process during that year was inadequate. It seemed as though the program was "trying to fill a quota. It didn't really matter if you had the academic background. People were set up for failure" (Interview, January 26, 1993). People beginning in the program had a variety of academic backgrounds with some more prepared for the program than others. "Sure it's good to be motivated and have world experience but you must have the academic foundations when you are dealing in the academic world. Some people understood while others did not" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

The writing and study skills programs were helpful in showing the respondent how to research and write reports but it was "as confusing as hell to have to learn to write in one class and actually having to write in another. We were not given any practise time" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

He described his experience in the program as "disappointing". "It was a totally new experience for everyone, we were hopeful and we were scared." The respondent did not feel that he was academically prepared for the program. He would have rather not been given admission to the program and told to upgrade. He went into the program hoping to fulfill a dream and came away feeling like a failure.

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[61] The respondent stated that he was "touched" when the coordinator gave out Christmas hampers to the students because she knew how broke the students were.

The respondent is presently employed as the education counsellor for his Band. His experience on campus has helped him in his job. He stated that he cautions his students about the pressures of university life. He also stated that he is empathetic to his continuing students because he knows "how hard it can be" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

The respondent had many recommendations for the program. The respondent made reference to the courses they took while in the program. "The courses we took were set for us. We were not able to take what interested us. This was a struggle for people who were not sure whether they belonged on campus" (Interview, January 26, 1993).

He recommended a more effective screening process because many did not know what they were getting into and did not have the academic background to succeed. He suggested having a 4 or 6 week intensive program during the summer to allow students the opportunity to "live the university lifestyle for a while". He stated that many students are drawn by the prestige of going to university without knowing what it entails (Interview, January 26, 1993).

The respondent also recommended stringent entry guidelines. He felt is was better for a person to not gain entry than to be admitted and not succeed. The respondent stated that as a former CUT participant and as an education counsellor:

> You do not do anyone a favour by admitting people who are not prepared. The student feels terrible about failing, the program looks bad because of its high attrition rate, and the Band loses out because it has wasted funding dollars on an unsuccessful student. That student may be better served by spending a year in UCEP or upgrading"(Interview, January 26, 1993).

The participant stated that failure in the CUT program is something that he is still dealing with.

Appendix B

Some of the more notable recommendations the University of Alberta Senate Task Force Report (1978)were as follows:

Recommendation #5: The requirements for Mature Students status continue to be sufficiently flexible to recognize the work and educational experience of native people. To this recommendation, the President , Dr Horowitz wrote" There are not plans for any reduction in the flexibility of the Mature Student admission policies.

Recommendation #8: That a summer orientation program be established for native students for who room, board and tuition would be provided. The program would include information about:

- services of the Office of the Advisor on Native Affairs
- the Native Student's Club
- Communication skills
- course selection
- registration or pre-registration procedures
- professors of Native Studies courses
- housing
- daycare facilities
- financing

Recommendation #10: That the Office of the Advisor on Native Affairs be provided with a sufficient number of staff members to meet the needs of native students on the campus and to maintain liaison with Alberta's native community (Follow up report P.7)

Recommendation #14: That the Office of the Advisor of Native Affairs search out and provide tutors for native students when needed and that funds for payment of these tutors be provided by the University and included in the budget of the Office of the Advisor on Native Affairs.

Appendix C

Transition Year Program (TYP) Application

Name__________________ Date __________ Birth Date ___________
Address _____________Phone Number ________ Native Status ______ Language Spoken ______Written ______
Gender _____ Marital Status ____________ Dependents ___________
Ages___________ Emergency Name/Number _____________________
Highest Level of High School (give name of school)____________
List of subjects in final year __________________________________
Highest Level of Math _____________ Other Math courses ______
Highest Level of English ________Other English courses ______
Highest Level of Language other than English _________________
I require a Native Language test (specify language) __________
Matriculated ___________Non Matriculated Adult ________________
General Diploma _________ Other Post Secondary ________________
List significant work experience _________________________________
Faculty of Interest (field of study) _________________________
Funding Agency: Band _______ Indian Affairs ________ Self ____
Student Finance Board _____ Education Counsellor ____________
Transcripts, Secondary and Post Secondary (enclosed) _________

I understand that I will be taking these courses in the TYP program: Mandatory Study Skills, Writing for University, Math 100, English 210, Psychology 260, Anthropology 201, Language other than English(e.g. Cree or other)

I would like information on the following: (Please Check)

- •TYP orientation
- •Day Care
- •Banking
- •Libraries
- •Campus map
- •Other
- •Housing
    - on Campus
    - off Campus
- •Aboriginal Student Council
- •School of Native Studies
- •Fees and Book costs
- •Student Orientation
- •Phys. Ed. facilities
- •Student Awards
- •Student counselling
- •Disabled Student Services
- •City Native Organizations
- •Native Adult Summer University
- •University Health Services
- •Mature Student Services
- •Career Counselling
- •Job Placement
- •Transportation
- •Parking Services
- •Native Student Services Newsletter

I would like the these topics addressed in the Study Skills course.

Time Management
Stress Management
Note Taking
Exam Anxiety
Research Projects and Papers
Studying while Parenting
Exam Writing
Other

How did you hear about the TYP? Media ______ Native Student Services Presentation ______ School Counsellor _____ Relative/ Friend ____ University student ______ Other (specify) _______

I am enclosing my letter of intent _______ and the University of Alberta admission fee of $25.00 _____

Application Deadline: April 15, 19__ If you wish to register in September 19__

Mail Application to:

TYP Coordinator, Native Student Services
124 Athabasca Hall, University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E8

Please use the back of this form if you need to include additional information in your application.

If you have any questions, please call the TYP coordinator at 492-1990 or the Native Student Services main office at 492-5677.

Appendix D

Coordinated University Transition Program Contract

The purpose of this contract is to make you aware of your rights and responsibilities in the CUTP. It is not a legally enforceable contact and is written as a mutual understanding between you and the coordinator to ensure your success at the University of Alberta.

I understand that it is my responsibility

•to attend all classes;

•to keep up with assigned reading and written assignments in my courses;

•to contact my instructor as soon as possible if I have missed classes, in order to find out about new assignments;

•to contact my instructor about any domestic affliction or illness that may have delayed an assignment or caused me to miss a mid-term exam;

•to contact the CUTP coordinator the Academic Counsellor if I am having problems keeping up with my assignments or miss an exam;

•to consult with my instructor and the CUTP Coordinator if I do poorly on my assignments or mid-term;

•to arrange for mid-term meetings with the CUTP Coordinator to discuss my progress around mid-October and mid-February;

•to be knowledgeable of all University regulations in the University deadlines without penalty and

•to maintain a minimum grade of 4 in my courses.

I am aware

•that my class attendance will be monitored by my instructor and that tutorials services will not be available to me for courses in which I have missed classes;

•that if I miss three classes without justifiable reason (i.e. domestic affliction, illness) I will cease my studies in the CUTP, and my funding agency will be notified that my studies have been terminated;

•that if I wish to withdraw from a course, I should inform the CUTP Coordinator and **must** fill out the appropriate forms as outlined in Regulation 15.2J in the University Calendar; and that failure to do so, could result in an absent/fail in the course (which could cause considerable delay in returning to full-time studies at the University)

•that if I withdraw to less than three courses without finding an alternate course, I will lose my full-time status at the University, and my funding agency will be informed;

•that if I am ill or have a domestic affliction (or any compelling reason such as religious holiday) during a final examination, I should apply to Exams and Timetabling (Registrar's Office) for a deferred examination no later than 48 hours after the scheduled time of the exam (Note that Arts but not all Faculties grant deferred exam privileges);

•that re-examination privileges are granted at the discretion of the Faculty; Arts Faculty requires that the final exam be worth 40% minimum. Unclassified students, however, **do not** have re-examination privileges;

•that I have a right to appeal their grade on a course and to request a reappraisal (Sec 16.7 of the University Calendar); and that I can consult the Student Advisor in Student Services or the Student Ombudsman if I need assistance in preparing an appeal;

•that I must follow the Code of Student Behavior as outlined in Sec 19 of the University Calendar for academic offences (such as disruptive conduct in classes, assault and sexual harassment); and that I have a right to lay a complaint or appeal a penalty as defined in the Code's procedures;

•that if I am registered as an Unclassified student, failure in one course (a grade of 3 or less) will result in me being withdrawn from the CUTP and that I cannot apply for a re-examination in the course, nor do I have the right to appeal to be admitted as an unclassified student again. Further, that failure in an unclassified course will seriously hinder my chances or entering a University faculty; and

•that I am required to write the Alberta Universities Writing Competence Test following the completion of my Writing for University course (and will make repeated attempts if necessary) in order to meet the University deadline.

These conditions and implications have been discusses with me and I fully understand them.

______________________________	______________________
Student's Signature	Date